EXPLORING CHANGE:

ARTS PROVISION AND COMMUNITY ARTS IN RURAL NORTHERN IRELAND

Acknowledgements

http://comartspartner.org/

http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org/

http://www.buildingchangetrust.org/

Article 27 UN Declaration of Human Rights.

(1) *Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.*

(2) *Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.*

Foreword

Community Arts Partnership and the Rural Community Network through the Exploring Change project initiated conversations with arts organisations, community arts organisations, arts facilitators, artists and participants in artistic activities in rural Northern Ireland over a period of 18 months.

The aim was to extract primary information regarding the state of arts provision and particularly community arts provision in rural Northern Ireland.

Participants in those discussions also included Arts officers from local councils, representatives from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, advisors for local politicians and representatives from Arts centres in the larger towns.

> *"I'm only interested in writing…I'm not interested in constitutions or funding or outputs or outcomes and neither is anyone else in our group….we get writers we know to come in and read their work to the group…but otherwise we get together to share our work"* **(Mournes' Participant)**

Like many conversations there was no one distinct narrative, in fact the research uncovered a complex weave of contrasting, sometimes competing, sometimes coherent, other times disparate narratives, all of which are outlined below.

The quotes highlighted reflect the differing orientations of the participants and throughout this report we will hear more of the voices we engaged with during the project.

Whilst there are competing, contrasting and on occasion contradictory narratives contained within the thoughts of the people engaged in conversations with CAP and RCN directly, one thing that can be said is that many of the participants suggest firmly that there is a place for the Arts and particularly Community Arts in rural Northern Ireland.

In fact the vast majority of questionnaire respondents and participants in the discussions agreed that Community Arts can address pressing rural issues, they can offer substantial benefits to participants, that they can be a vehicle for change.

For some in this discussion, a minority, Arts provision alone is essential to ensure that people living in rural areas get access to creative activity, for others Community Arts projects create avenues for an investigation into, and offer the potential for preparation of plans to aid in, the reduction of social isolation, improving community relations, building confidence and improving skill levels.

In this report there is also an exploration of themes emerging from what might be considered official narratives, the rise of the Game of Thrones and its impact on Northern Ireland's rural community, the impact (or lack of) of government intervention; action planning, dedicated expenditure and community planning. At this point we raise questions which emerge from a contrasting set of issues, the real lived problems emerging from our discussions; unemployment, population drift, reduction in farm income, and the attendant social problems; social exclusion, isolation, all the way to self-harm and suicide, emerging from an area experiencing stagnation and decline.

> *"I started off writing to help my depression… over time I've helped get the group constituted and we've got some funding and we've had people come in to do sessions about writing and about technique…the group offers people a chance to get together and work through problems…"* **(Newry participant)**

If this report manages to capture one thing though, it might be a voicing of something that was apparent in much of the discussion, a demand for improvement and a sense of disconnection from official narratives and the relating of real lived experiences.

The sense of disconnection between the policy shapers and policy makers on the one hand and those arts practitioners and participants, particularly those involved in Community Arts practice, on the other was sometimes sharply expressed. Those who confront the issues arising from the difficulties emerging from rural life in the arts often felt their voice or experience isn't being heard or responded to.

> *"We're not sitting around here waiting for Belfast or Derry to tell us what we need to do – We know how good our work is - We are working with young people – one young fellow thinking about suicide now going to do his certificate to be able to teach music – we have brilliant outreach programmes – we have great teaching programmes – if only someone from DARD or the Arts Council would come to see it"*[1] **(Draperstown participant)**

Concerns were raised regarding funding, from the allocation of available resources for rural areas to the perception of low levels of funding for the Arts generally and Community Arts in particular, and beyond that the perceived weaknesses of short term funding for projects.

Questions were also raised regarding access to purpose-built facilities, rural transport services, the need for training programmes for artists, and the perceived lack of support for community arts projects by a range of statutory bodies.

* Regional Strategic Transport Network consists of:

Key Transport Corridors | Link Corridors | Trunk Roads | Railways | Currently Under Review

Arising from the recognition of these perceptions, the partners involved in delivering the Exploring Change project, Community Arts Partnership and the Rural Community Network, offer through expertise and experience, a range of recommendations that hold the potential to bridge the gap between the various agents of these narratives and explore change for enhanced public benefit.

CHAPTER ONE

RURAL NORTHERN IRELAND
– COMPETING NARRATIVES

CHAPTER 1: Rural Northern Ireland – Competing Narratives

Rural Northern Ireland has been the focus of a substantial amount of newspaper and television coverage – from magazine-style shows promoting the latest popular TV programmes to serious economic and business programmes which suggest that rural Northern Ireland may be doing well and that economic growth is burgeoning. This is more about high-level economic activity that the general health of the rural economy felt at 'on the ground', so to speak.

Mostly these programmes offer similar fare, the highlighting of the picturesque scenery accompanied by enthusiastic encouragement to visit Northern Ireland, the interviews with local people who, either as hoteliers, tour operators, prop makers, craftspeople, trainers of animals or as actors and extras, have stories to tell about how much life has improved, offering opportunities, in particular creative opportunities, they never thought possible and happily suggesting that the arrival of Game of Thrones in Northern Ireland has turned, what was once a desperately weak, rural economy into an economic powerhouse. This fits neatly with the expert analysis provided by the more serious economic commentators and backed up by representatives from Tourism NI, local government officials and elected members of the NI Assembly.[1]

If, as some would suggest, the rural economy has benefited to the tune of £110 million in the space of a couple of years, the "experts" predict that there is much more to come.[2]

If this was the only appraisal on offer, then one might ask why the need for a research project looking into the rural situation as witnessed by arts, and in particular community arts, organisations, groups,

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[1] http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/hit-series-game-of-thrones-generates-8-6m-in-publicity-for-northern-ireland-1-6456816

[2] http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2014/apr/04/game-of-thrones-northern-ireland-economy-tourism

artists and practitioners, which ultimate aim is to provide information which will be used to advocate for change in rural communities.

Yet the first annual monitoring report on the NI Economic Strategy in 2013 only uses the term 'rural' twice with little to offer in the way of evidence of a powerhouse economy as opposed to nine mentions of Corporation Tax (which at that point was not available to be varied).[3]

This study is necessary, perhaps even vital, because there is another story, a less heralded story, a story that is less likely to find its way onto American magazine style television shows and much harder to find generally even with all the capacities of modern search engines; a story of decline.

Of declining income, whether it is Farm Business Income, Cash Receipts or Net Farm Income, often resembling a rollercoaster ride at the best of times, but in recent years, evidence suggests a fall in each of these essential income avenues.[4]

Of a decline in employment prospects and jobs, with unemployment rates, at times, similar to those in deprived urban areas, a declining population with drift, especially of young people, towards opportunities elsewhere, of a decline in accessible services with centralisation particularly of healthcare provision.

Of declining mental health with increasing rates of suicide and self-harm [5] and reports which claim that in the Dungannon and South Tyrone, Enniskillen and Omagh areas alone, 20 per cent of people

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[3] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/ni-economic-strategy-first-annual-monitoring-report-2013.pdf
[4] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-dard-290115-northern-ireland-agricultural

[5] O'Reilly D, Rosato M, Connolly S. Urban and rural variations in morbidity and mortality in Northern Ireland. BMC Public Health 2007;7:1-6

experience mental health difficulties with little in the way of supporting service provision and a culture of denial, perhaps even of silence, which makes information gathering difficult.[6] "Current suicide prevention policies in the Republic of Ireland, England and Scotland incorporate specific recognition of and provision for tackling suicide and the impact of suicide according to geographic rurality. However, Northern Ireland's Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2011 [23] is somewhat limited in this dimension."[7]

And where there are actual increases they only point to yet further evidence of decline.

Increases in rural deprivation, with proximity to key services, healthcare, dentistry, optical, pharmaceutical, and other general services harder to access than urban counterparts.

Increases in poverty with declining income and opportunity and fuel poverty which the latest reports suggest exists in almost 40 per cent of households in rural Northern Ireland.[8]

These are the complex and competing narratives in which Exploring Change, the partnering of the Rural Community Network (RCN) and Community Arts Partnership (CAP), the former an investigator, reporter and advocate for the rural community generally and crucially for those who experience social difficulty and deprivation, and the latter, an organisation which advocates for the rights of all citizens to access the arts and lobbies for additional resourcing and regard for the creative agency, particularly for those experiencing deprivation, poverty and social exclusion, come together to investigate. The

Community Arts Partnership's Landmarks project in Gortin, Omagh

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[6] http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/mother-who-lost-teen-daughter-to-suicide-extends-her-mental-health-campaign-to-rural-areas-of-northern-ireland-31083327.html

[7] http://www.research.hscni.net/sites/default/files/EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf re DHSSPS. Protect life: a shared vision. The Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2011. Belfast: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 200

[8] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/social-development/reports/report-on-fuel-poverty/

aim of this investigation is to gather information to facilitate the examination and assessment of the present conditions in which people in rural areas live, how they utilise the arts, in particular community arts, to report, reflect and assess the conditions they experience and how they might cohere their own plans and strategies for change.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 2: Introduction and Methodology

At a Rural Community Forum held in Enniskillen in early December 2014 it was noted by one of the participants, that despite almost everyone in the room working in the Arts whether in statutory agencies, as artists, as arts workshop facilitators, as directors of small rural arts organisations or community groups which used the arts for community development, it was the first time many of the participants had met. [9]

One of the Rural Community Forums was held in the Fermanagh House, Enniskillen

Certainly it was suggested that there was little conscious networking amongst the participants and that there had been little discussion about the work being carried out by the practitioners, assessments of that work and thoughts about how they might improve on the projects they were presently involved in delivering.

It was also noted in a meeting in Omagh's Strule Arts Centre, that only on occasion of a "well-funded outfit" like CAP facilitating a process, most local groups couldn't afford to access the arts space for networking or any other purpose. Whilst "community rates" may be offered (if one phones, not via websites) the charges are still prohibitive for many.

The Exploring Change project was established firstly as a process by which information would be gathered on a hitherto under-researched area, that of community arts provision and practice in rural Northern Ireland.

Through review and desk research, it had been established that very little if any research had been carried out in the field of community arts practice in rural areas locally. An online search between 2005 and 2015 may elicit some investigations but none examining this area. It was also felt that where

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[9] Fermanagh House Enniskillen – December 3rd 2014

discussion had taken place it was found that the values placed on community arts were either incorrect, incomplete, wholly false or that Community Arts practice was not widely understood.

Given that Community Arts Partnership's predecessor, the New Belfast Community Arts Initiative and the Community Arts Forum were conducting research with regards Community Arts practice and provision in urban settings, it seemed logical that the same research was required to be conducted in rural areas.

Aims and Objectives

The Exploring Change project set out a number of aims and objectives

- To use Participatory Action Research to facilitate the widest possible interaction between those carrying out the research and those participating in providing information and expertise.[10]
- To demonstrate through the research findings that Community Arts practice has a wide range of applications; peace-building, conflict transformation, social, economic and health regeneration as well as educational benefits, and
- That through Community Arts practices the information would be used to create the potential to facilitate change in rural communities
- It was suggested that a long term aim was to aid regional policy change.

Contrary to the negative ambitions that a few academics working in the area of applied arts throughout these islands have attached to the term (and indeed practice), **Community Arts** continue to be recognised and thrive in Northern Ireland, in both rural and urban settings. Whilst some may hold that due to the socio-economic concentration of need with our metropolitan areas, there may be less focus on the needs of rural communities, how such an assessment of need, beyond post codes and weighted demographics actually maps across Northern Ireland and the boundaries of what is and is not rural, is still less sure than those assertions. There are others who believe that the use of the term community in an arts context to be problematic in any case: "…the plural form of community, rather than provide a critical energy that supports equality and recognition of diversity as most plurals

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[10] http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1801/3334

do, actually divides."[11] (Author Glenn Patterson, the 'C Word' presentation to November 2013, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation ArtWorks Special Initiative., Tuck and O'Donnell)

Principles of Participatory Action Research

The methodological orientation used was Participatory Action Research (PAR) which differs markedly from more standard research methods in that, rather than the research process, and the researcher, being independent of the subject, PAR brings researcher and research subject together, facilitating a collaborative process where the collation of the popular knowledge located within communities, community groups and individuals engaged in the prosecution of the activities being investigated, is married with objective research rigours.

This accessing of "on the ground" knowledge ensures the widest possible information gathering resource, allowing for a thorough investigation of local issues for the purpose of social transformation and the achievement of social justice.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a methodology commits the researcher to the development of a particular *praxis*: the practice by which researcher and research participant reflexively probe a particular issue together in order to find possible solutions. [12]

Our aim is not simply to understand the opportunities (or lack of) or indeed the difficulties, constraints or challenges within particular research groupings, but as with all PAR, offer a platform to explore change and to promote empowerment. The adoption of these theoretical resources offers more structural and transformative qualities, blending the praxis of ethnographic inquiry, with action research and participative inquiry, to build narrative and qualitative understanding through active engagement. Exploring change suggest exactly this – it presupposes that change is more than a theoretical matrix but a desirable, transformative, relational space, where the agency of the arts cannot only lead, but inform, support and amplify, both individually and collectively.

This including approach through textual analysis aligned to a praxis of interrogating both context and agency, allows the PAR rapporteur the opportunity to define and in so doing, offer the means of how one might defy, the constraints around community art making in rural Northern Ireland.

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[11] Author Glenn Patterson, the 'C Word' presentation to November 2013, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation ArtWorks Special Initiative., Tuck and O'Donnell

[12] Handbook of Action Research. London:Sage.Fals-Borda, O. (2006) 'The north-south convergence: a 30-year first-person assessment of PAR', Action Research

It also allows us to turn engagement contexts into research contexts: with the participant-turned researcher examining the context anew through the perspective of a critical enquirer, affording greater reading and hearing of stakeholder's responses and ambitions.

PAR interfaces well with a community development approach, which is centred on facilitating empowerment, giving voice and ensuring autonomy.

Data Collection

In the case of the Exploring Change project data was gathered in close collaboration with a range of stakeholders, over a range of artistic practices, giving those research participants a voice, and in particular through the organisation of rural community forums and face to face interviews, an input into the questions and issues that the research should investigate and report back on.

These active research methodologies included stakeholders from rural and rural arts organisations, artists, participants, funders, and others from a range of community development backgrounds (network members, community development officers, members of grass-roots community based organisations and other interested individuals, see Appendix 4).

The data gathering methods (questionnaires, forums and visits to community organisations and groups) were based on the need to reach as many stakeholders as possible within the given research timeframe; the need to tailor data collection methods to a wide range of stakeholders, including disabled participants and young people; the need to fit data collection around existing project meetings and community group timetables; and to provide illustrative convenience sampling process data.

It is worth pointing out that collaborative research of this kind which involves rural communities taking part in community arts processes is rare, and there is very little existing research material from Northern Ireland to draw upon. The Exploring Change project was heading into hitherto unexplored territory.

In order to involve as many viewpoints, opinions and expertise from different aspects of the processes, questionnaire data analysis has been 'triangulated' from host organisations, participants and artists, and is added to with desk research, supporting evidence from project coordinators, and information drawn from existing RCN and CAP resources.

The three rural community arts forums were held in Omagh, Enniskillen and Newry to further inform the research.

Each of the three questionnaires, with the addition of the forums, was intended to glean slightly different information, depending on the target respondent and convenience sampling process data.

Research Methods

The research methods used in this study, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and are set out in the list below and each element of these is then developed in greater detail.

- literature review and desk research;
- develop research methodologies
- Recruitment of groups to participate in the research - Consult with relevant stakeholders; Liaise with groups, individuals, organisations, institutions, practitioners and agencies
- development of indicators and questionnaires (in three groups);
- Collection of data: convenience sampling and datasets
- Quantitative (Questionnaire) Data collection: project visits and observation with each CAP rural community group; Distribution of questionnaires – primarily via email and at forums; interview-questionnaires for participants;
- Qualitative (focus group) data collection: with community groups/local interest groups/government agencies and artists
- Regular meetings with CAP's chief executive, policy and information officer, the project researcher and RCN policy and public affairs officer to plan and agree the approach to developing the research and to inform the committee of research outcomes as they evolve
- Analysis of data
- Production of report

Literature review

A literature review was carried out which examined two broad themes:

- the wider policy background relating to rural policy; and
- literature review of community arts, and how it can be applied in rural settings

The wider policy background considers the policies, strategies and programmes of Government and other agencies that may be relevant to the rural communities that community arts programmes may contribute to.

This wider policy background is contained in chapter 3 of this report.

The review of the literature on community arts in Northern Ireland includes an examination of how community arts is valued, its links to community development (in particular rural development) and its relationship to social change.

This is contained in chapter 4 of this report.

Recruitment of groups to participate in the research

In order to involve as many viewpoints, opinions and expertise from different aspects of the processes, evidence (in the form of questionnaires and interviews) has been 'triangulated' from host organisations, participants and artists, as well as desk research, the addition of supporting evidence from CAP project coordinators, and drawing on existing RCN and CAP resources.

Rural Community Forum in Omagh

The organisations/groups questionnaire allowed for information to be gathered on structures governing rural community arts, the impact of both volunteer led organisations and statutory organisations, and the geographic reach and range of activities.

The artist questionnaire was useful in obtaining information regarding facilitation processes, perceived problems and benefits of using community arts, and prior knowledge needed of rural settings in order to develop community arts work in rural areas.

The participant questionnaire offered a more personal reflection and an idea of direct experience of participation. Participants could comment on what worked or didn't work for them, what their personal aims were in taking part, how community arts participation makes them feel, what prevents or facilitates their participation, and how their experience of the rural impacts on their participation. It is about perception, attitudes and personal experience.

However, it is the overall piecing together of these different points of view which helps to build a comprehensive picture of current rural community arts provision in Northern Ireland.

Questionnaires were sent out through CAP and CAP affiliated groups – to all organisations, artists and participants involved in current rural community arts projects – through RCN – to all members who had been involved in community arts projects, or expressed an interest in being involved in one, to personal contacts, through word of mouth, to arts officers based in councils throughout the province and finally questionnaires were made available to all attendees at the three rural community arts forums. In all, over 750 questionnaires were distributed.

All current CAP community arts projects were visited in order to collect face-to-face participant feedback, and to facilitate the filling in of participant questionnaires.

How respondents of the questionnaires were chosen:

RCN provided a list of groups from their membership who had either previously been involved in arts projects, or who had expressed an interest in doing so. These were initially canvassed to determine whether they would be willing to answer a questionnaire, and subsequently those who responded positively were sent an email version of the questionnaire. These made up a proportion of organisations surveyed.

CAP projects from the cycle 2014-15 based in rural areas were also canvassed for organisation, artist and participant questionnaire responses. In addition, artists on the CAPtabase (CAP artists database) were also contacted for their responses.

Participant responses were elicited from CAP community arts projects. Questionnaires were completed face-to-face by the researcher, who visited the CAP projects the participant-respondents

were taking part in. This enabled any queries to be answered immediately, the key premise of the project to be explained, and ensured that any access difficulties could be avoided.

Distribution of questionnaires was facilitated primarily via email and at forums, with additional responses coming from organisations and artists who had heard by word-of-mouth of the project, and wanted to contribute to the research.

Participants completed their questionnaires via face-to-face interviews.

Determining indicators

The key research indicators for the questionnaire comprised four main areas, which were tailored slightly differently depending on the target respondent (either organisation, artist or participant). These were based on the main aims of the research project to:

- Map existing community arts practice in rural areas
- Employ process based action research methods during this process
- Indicate the potential for future impact of such research

Consideration was given to questions such as: What are the processes of community arts in rural areas? How can we best evaluate them? How do people approach community arts in rural areas presently? Where are the gaps? How might future work be developed? These provided the basis for both questionnaire and forum indicators (additional forum indicators are highlighted in a subsequent section).

Indicators were decided collaboratively between CAP, RCN and the researcher, and consisted of: basic demographic information, in order to determine the reach and context of the community arts projects; the type and level of experience of community arts projects, including their perceived impact in rural areas (and alternatively, in the case of artists, the type and level of experience of working in rural areas); background information on rural issues; and how future projects should be tailored to the needs of rural communities. On the questionnaire, space was also given to encouraging additional comments, deemed to be particularly important in order to include viewpoints and issues which had not been foreseen by the researcher and questionnaire design team.

After determining key research indicators, attention was turned to developing a questionnaire for each of the three respondent groups which was easily accessible, logical, and enabled he respondents to contribute valid and meaningful inputs to the research.

Development of questionnaires (for three specific groups)

After determining key research indicators, attention was turned to developing a questionnaire for each of the three respondent groups which was easily accessible, logical, and enabled the respondents to contribute valid, reliable and meaningful inputs to the research.

Indicators were turned into questions which fell into broadly speaking the same four groups: basic demographic information; type and level of experience of community arts (or in the case of artists, experience of using community arts in rural areas); background information on rural issues; and how future community arts projects should be tailored to the needs of rural areas.

Among the types of information to be collected were: 1) facts about the rural areas surveyed, the types of activities experienced, and demographic information regarding organisations and participants of rural community arts projects; 2) level of experience and knowledge regarding community arts activities; 3) expectations of what community arts activities can achieve; and 4) perceptions of what needs to be changed for future activities to be effective.

Care was taken in the wording of the questionnaire, the format (ordering of questions), and particular emphasis placed on tailoring questionnaires to the needs of participants with learning disabilities (written in easier to understand language) and to young people.[13]

Visits to community groups in order to carry out face-to-face interviews to facilitate filling in the questionnaires helped to minimise misunderstandings and to maximise the validity and reliability of information.

Participants were visited during their dedicated project time, which had the added benefit of being able to speak with artists, organisers and participants often as a whole group, thus gaining an overview and overall impression of each project. Some of the issues raised and comments made during these visits provided additional questions and material for the forums, and are included within the qualitative analysis chapter.

Aside from general background information (contact details, mission statement of organisations, etc), and the space to write in additional comments at the end of the questionnaire, all questions were multiple-choice.

In order to provide a baseline of information regarding groups, artists and participants using community arts in rural areas, mainly closed questions were used within the questionnaires. This had

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[13] November 2008 National Centre for Research Methods NCRM/012

the advantage of being able to include more variables, as 'tick box' questions are quick to answer, and provide answers which are easy to code.

Given that there were also four different types of questionnaire (one each for artists and organisations, and two for participants – an easy-read version and a standard version), closed questions allowed for easier comparisons across the data collected and convenience sampling.

Any disadvantages arising from bias, or lack of space to provide alternative responses were countered by the time and space given over to discussing questions and further issues arising in some depth during the rural community arts forums. *Likert scaling* was used for determining attitudes towards benefits and difficulties in employing community arts. Some questions on the artists questionnaire asked respondents to rate their responses from 1-5 from a number of possible answers. These were the most problematic in the responses they elicited, as many did not follow the instructions given in order to give the required information.

An introductory paragraph was included to introduce the respondents to the project and explain key terms (such as the definition of community arts, and the definition of rural used for the purposes of the questionnaire indicators). Many of the questionnaires were emailed out, and therefore required a more in depth level of introduction. Much of this could be abbreviated in face-to-face interview questionnaires, as it could be explained informally, and to a number of respondents at once.

The participant questionnaires were pretested in face-to-face interviews with a group of participants with learning disabilities, which enabled the design and wording of the questionnaire to be significantly modified and simplified to subsequent groups' needs.

Many of these changes were also included in questionnaires for young people, and to other groups in general, making the flow and wording of the questionnaires less complicated, as well as shorter, and therefore easier to fill in.

The questionnaires were given content validity through submitting them to a research steering group from CAP and RCN. Reliability in consistency of results was increased by using the same interviewer for all participant responses which were carried out face-to-face, and by asking those who had taken part in the forums (where similar questions were raised in greater depth) to fill out artist and organisation questionnaires on the day. The interviewer was available at all forums to answer any questions that needed clarifying in relation to the questionnaires.

All answer options for each of the questionnaires were then assigned a code in order to facilitate recording and analysis of the data. These were numerical for closed-question responses, and colour

coded for open-ended question responses.   Forms were returned from: 32 organisations; 17 artists; 50 participants.

The Forums

The Rural Community Forum in Omagh took place in the Strule Arts Centre

The series of three forums held in Omagh, Enniskillen and Newry in November and December 2014 provided time and space to investigate a series of open ended questions in some depth, which couldn't be achieved through the predominantly quantitative data collection of the questionnaires.

Forums also allowed for networking to take place between community groups, artists and participants operating in disparate rural locations within the province. Data was amassed from the forums in written and photographic form, and audio recorded in case of the need to corroborate information. Forums provided the qualitative data contained in Segment 11. Participants for the forums were recruited via existing contacts (eg those who had been canvassed to contribute to the questionnaires), arts officers from the councils, who had also been asked to pass on the information to their contacts; third party e-newsletters (such as ACNI and Volunteer Now), and all those who had expressed an interest in the process of developing a contact base. An open call for participation was put out through the Community Arts Partnership weekly e-newsletter (CAW, the community arts weekly), through RCN's *Rural Brief*, via email and phone invitations, and through word-of-mouth.

Attendees included community groups, local interest groups, government agencies, funding bodies, artists and participants in varying constellations.

A general introduction to the research was given, which clarified key concepts such as community arts as understood within the remit of the research, provided a rationale, and summarised what the

research had achieved to date. Key questions were posed to act as provocations in small groups, and as a whole group during the course of the forums.

Whole group questions included:

What is meant by 'rural'? – an exploration of what is understood as rural beyond the DARD definition of a small town or village with a population of under 4,500;

- How can/does community arts support and benefit community development in your rural area and How do you know?;

- Why might groups not employ creative or community arts practice?;

- How can the arts be used to involve hard to reach groups?

- How can/do rural groups support community relations?; and

- Ideas for sustainable practice – what do we want, and how do we get it?

Small group open round table discussions enabled more focussed discussions around a) the challenges faced by groups with paid workers; b) those run by volunteers; c) how existing skills in rural areas may be developed; d) issues around cross-border rural community arts and e) the relationship between arts centres and grass roots organisations, which juxtaposed commercial pressures with community needs.

Ample time was given to feedback and networking.

The number of people who attended the forums (with the number of CAP/RCN delegates in brackets):

| **Omagh:** 38 (5) | **Enniskillen:** 25 (3) | **Newry:** 8 (3) |

Each table of participants was responsible for recording their own written responses to the questions. These were collected, collated and answers colour-coded thematically before scrutinising them for

trends emerging across each forum individually, and across the rural community arts forums collectively.

Meetings

To maintain a coherent overview of the project, regular meetings were held between the CAP director, information and policy manager and RCN contacts and contact by email and phone was also carried out on an informal but regular basis.

The CAP Chief Executive, Information and Policy manager and RCN Policy and Public Affairs Officer as well as the CAP researcher formed the steering group for the research project.

The researcher attended a number of conferences to present findings and for further research purposes. A number of interim and progress reports were generated by the researcher.

Analysis of data

All data collected was allocated a code – either numerically for quantitative data, or colour-coded according to trends emerging in the case of the rural community arts forums – in order to reduce the information appropriately.

The data was then recorded pictorially in the form of diagrams and charts for quantitative data, and in narrative form for qualitative data.

CHAPTER THREE

RURAL POLICY AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE EXPLORING CHANGE RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED

CHAPTER 3: Rural policy and the context in which the Exploring Change research has been conducted

The following chapters speak to the wider context of rural and community arts policy and some of the academic literature surrounding them.

As there are very few policy documents or wider research which address both the rural context and community arts within Northern Ireland, these will be considered separately: rural policy in this segment, and arts and community arts in the segment which follows.

Where links have been made through existing literature, or where the two naturally intersect, these will be alluded to when appropriate.

Segment 6 will also give contextual information regarding major political changes currently occurring in Northern Ireland which will affect the future genesis of both rural communities and the arts.

Clearly, the separation of culture, the arts and the rural is a false one, but the fact remains that in terms of arts policy and wider government policy, they have tended historically to have been treated separately.

Indeed, rural communities have in many ways remained marginalised and voiceless as the networks, resources, communications and needs of disparate communities have been subsumed under and/or assumed to be the same as those of urban areas.

Recognition that rural areas have different ways of operating and different needs to urban areas is a more recent development within the region.

Following is an overview of some of the main strategies, frameworks and policies affecting rural areas. These include:

- Programme for Government 2007-2011[14]
- Rural White Paper[15]
- Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a better Future (DRDNI, Belfast 2010)[16]
- Regeneration, poverty and multiple deprivation [17]
- Social Investment Fund[18]

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[14] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfgfinal.pdf
[15] http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/pub_RWP%20Action%20Plan%20July%202012.pdf
[16] https://www.drdni.gov.uk/publications/regional-development-strategy-2035
[17] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2012/social_dev/14512.pdf
[18] https://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/articles/social-investment-fund

- Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy[19]

- Contested Spaces Programme[20]

- Programme for Government 2011-2015[21]

- Review of Public Administration and the new Super-Council structure[22]

- EU Rural Development Programme [23]

- Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework[24]

- Rural Proofing [25]

- Arts Council Strategy[26]

- TBUC[27]

Rural Action Plan

Emerging from the DARD Rural Strategy 2007-2013 (DARD 2007) and the Programme for Government 2007-2011 (OFMDFM 2007), the Rural White Paper Action Plan was the first integrated action plan document to involve all departments of the executive in providing a framework to address the challenges facing rural communities in Northern Ireland.

Along with 'commitments to rural proofing and tackling rural poverty and social and economic isolation'[28], it provided the first joined-up approach to improving the lives of people living in rural areas.

Ministers Carál Ní Chuilín (left) and Michelle O'Neill (right)

[19] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2009/ofmdfm/7109.pdf
[20] http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/news/robinson-and-mcguinness-launch-interface-programme-partnership-atlantic-philanthropies
[21] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf
[22] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/work-of-the-executive/review-of-public-administration-short-version.htm
[23] http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/pub_nirdp.pdf
[24] https://www.dardni.gov.uk/articles/tackling-rural-poverty-social-isolation-new-framework
[25] http://www.agendani.com/rural-proofing/
[26] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ambitions-for-the-arts-5-year-strategy.pdf
[27] https://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/articles/together-building-united-community
[28] http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/pub_RWP%20Action%20Plan%20July%202012.pdf p4

As well as supporting the economic growth of rural areas, the Rural White Paper Action Plan also recognised both the need for tackling rural poverty and social isolation and the creation of…

> …a living countryside with strong, vibrant rural economies and …[is] committed to working together within the Executive to improve the quality of life for rural dwellers, to increase the public benefits of the rural environment and to support sustainable rural development.[29]

The Action Plan highlighted the infrastructural challenges which were faced by rural areas, stating that 'the provision of good communication infrastructure and connectivity are vital for the sustainability of our rural areas and are important in providing much needed access to those in communities who are isolated and vulnerable.' [30]

This is supported by the evidence collected from community groups and participants in the Exploring Change research (See Segments 8, 9 and 10) and is seen as a necessary step for any kind of long-term community development (including arts based community development) to take place.

Without the necessary infrastructure, any undertaking with and within rural communities will have a limited and purely localised effect.

If it is the remit of regional and local government to provide infrastructure and connectivity to rural communities, then it is the domain of community development initiatives (including community arts initiatives) to develop capacity within rural communities themselves.

Only in this way will the vision of the Rural White Paper Action Plan be met to create 'vibrant, strong rural communities, resilient and receptive to global trends through strong inter-linkages with urban areas and market towns' and places which 'maintain their distinctive features as 'places of social, historic and cultural uniqueness and places with a strong community infrastructure which can avail of economic, social and cultural opportunities'[31].

The restructuring of local government in light of the Review of Public Administration (RPA), which came into force in April 2015, along with its duty to include communities within Community Planning processes, has been cautiously welcomed as a positive step towards this goal.

Policy Priorities for the Action Plan were developed in relation to five key themes: 1) Urban/Rural Linkages; 2) Access to Services; 3) Rural Communities; 4) Rural Economies and 5) The Countryside.

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[29]http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/pub_RWP%20Action%20Plan%20July%202012.pdf - (2012: 2, foreword by Rt. Hon. Peter D Robinson MLA, First Minister and Martin McGuinness MP MLA, deputy First Minister)

[30] ibid
[31] Ibid p10

Community Arts have the potential to impact in particular but not exclusively upon two of these: rural communities and the countryside.

Policy priorities within Rural Communities include the following[32] (included are cross-references to relevant sections within Segment 7 on community arts):

- *To promote tolerance, health, well-being and inclusion for rural dwellers*: (see Segment 7, arts and health; arts and community relations; arts and inclusion)

- *Seeking to minimise, where it exists, disadvantage, poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst those living in rural areas and in particularly amongst vulnerable groups*: (see Segment 7, arts and social change; arts and health)

- *To preserve the cultural and social uniqueness of rural community life linked to its smaller population settlement*: (see Segment 7, arts and culture)

- *To promote the development of effective and inclusive rural governance structures and sufficient community capacity to engage in these structures*: (see Segment 7, arts and social change - especially community development)

- *To enhance and refine the Rural Development Programme to ensure the maximum benefit from future Programmes for rural communities*: (see Segment 7, arts and social change - especially community development)

Policy priorities regarding the Countryside (with cross-references to Segment 7) are as follows:

- *To safeguard the beauty and fabric of our rural areas and increase opportunities for all to enjoy the benefits of the countryside*: (see Segment 7, arts and culture; arts and heritage)

The Rural White Paper Action Plan and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) also acknowledge the great differences between rural areas in terms of disadvantage and isolation, and that the *perception* of isolation and lack of access can be as important and real as actual distance.

> *We live in a relatively small geographical island and rely heavily on linkages to our cities and urban centres but we must also strive to keep our rural areas sustainable and ensure that those people who live there either through choice or birth rightfully have access to services on an equitable basis and are offered opportunities in terms of accessing education, jobs, healthcare and leisure[33]*

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[32] Ibid p11
[33] Ibid p12-13

The Action Plan also recommends increased North South collaboration in approaches to rural issues, due to similarities in the social fabric of rural areas, which should result in increased learning and sharing of approaches[34].

However, despite the positive rhetoric of the White Paper Action Plan, and the focus on collaborative working across government departments, no additional funding will be made available to facilitate change within rural areas. Instead, priorities will need to be met out of current departmental budgets[35].

Any community arts programme which supports social change within rural areas will need to therefore rationalise its work within existing outcome priorities of relevant departments in order to access departmental funding.

This makes it even more prescient for relationships between the arts and community development and community planning agencies to be developed, as it is only through collaborative working through existing budgetary mechanisms that change will be facilitated, unless an argument is made for funding allocations to be increased.

A list of government departments, and their responsibilities under the Rural White Paper Action Plan (particularly in relation to addressing poverty, disadvantage, social exclusion and inequality in rural areas) is included in the Appendices

According to the action plan, its implementation necessitates a cross-departmental approach, with a lead department being nominated for each action[36].

In this regard, it falls explicitly to the DCAL family including the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, along with agencies like NI Screen, Libraries NI and other initiatives to progress the RWP. The three years of reporting, suggests only minimal engagement across departmental areas, more frequently agencies within the DCAL family pointing to individual programmes, where other agencies like PHA or indeed foundations like Barings Foundation (although not expressly mentioned), suggest any initiative beyond departmental boundaries.

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[34] Ibid p13
[35] Ibid p14
[36] Ibid p14

Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a better Future

The 'Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a better Future' (DRDNI, Belfast. 2010) offers a framework for the long-term integrated development of the regions in Northern Ireland. Its purpose is to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government, that is, to ensure that regional growth is purposeful and beneficial to all areas of the region[37].

Five of the eight aims of the revised RDS[38] are highly relevant to rural areas, and some are directly and indirectly relevant to the arts. They include:

- *To support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of Northern Ireland*

- *To support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential*

- *To promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities*

Over and above the aims of the RDS, the entire approach to the spatial framework is set to be 'person centred':

The guiding principle of the Spatial Framework is to put the person at the centre. To do this there needs to be an understanding of how different places are influenced by the range of services and functions required by individuals, where they are located, how frequently they are used and by whom. This helps give a clearer understanding of the relationship between people and places – an appreciation of where people live, work and access services.[39]

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[37] https://www.drdni.gov.uk/publications/regional-development-strategy-2035 - p3
[38] Ibid p11
[39] Ibid p19

One of the characteristics of rural areas is the diversity of their needs, and the huge variation in access to services and isolation. The RDS states that the 'notion of the degree of rurality – accessible and remote - can therefore be an important concept…' [40] It also states that compared with other areas within the EU, that there are few areas in Northern Ireland that could be considered truly remote[41].

However, to someone without means, who doesn't have access to transport, support, resources (including broadband and mobile phone reception) and opportunities, whether they are eight miles away from a 'cluster', fifteen miles away from a 'hub', or further afield, makes little difference.

According to the RDS, most people live within fifteen miles of a hub and eight miles away from a cluster[42], whereby the term 'hub' remains undefined, but would seem to be a town or city outside of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry with significant levels of service provision.

A cluster is defined as a group of 'cities and towns which can work together to create a critical mass to attract economic development and deliver services'[43].

The nature of community relations within a given area adds a further layer of complexity to issues of need, access and isolation.

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[40] Ibid P73
[41] Ibid p73
[42] Ibid p73
[43] Ibid p106

As well as economic considerations within rural areas, such as access to opportunities in education and employment, there is also recognition within the strategy for a need for sensitivity to the individual cultural make-up and social characteristics of any given area[44]

Aside from the focus on economic improvements, and a need to connect towns and rural areas, there is a focus on the need to revitalise small towns and villages, and in particular within areas of high deprivation (see section below on regeneration, poverty and deprivation).

This is the area in which community arts can be of particular use – the ways in which the arts and community arts can be instrumental in fostering social change are highlighted in Segment 7.

Community arts practice is also very useful in promoting the collaborative ways of working tailored to individual needs which are essential to developing '[a]n integrated approach between government departments, agencies and communities [that] will ensure that regeneration plans reflect the specific needs of each community.' [45] Responsibility for the preparation of development plans and schemes has now transferred to local councils under the new council structure[46]. (See below for implications of the upcoming changes to council structure). Guidelines developed by the Department of Rural Development (DRD) and the Department of the Environment (DOE) will be made available to the new Councils setting out central government policies and strategies in order to support this transition. A focus is placed on 'collaboration rather than competition between places.'[47]

Rural Community Network responded to the RDS consultation by saying *'[w]e are concerned that whilst the RDS identifies indicators, it does not set clear, time bounded targets that progress can be monitored against.'[48]*

Regeneration, Poverty and Multiple Deprivation

The following strategies relate to how regeneration, poverty and multiple deprivation affects rural areas in Northern Ireland.

Regeneration and anti-poverty strategies in Northern Ireland are more complex and problematic than in the rest of the UK and Ireland. New responsibilities conferred to Local Government since April 2015 are implemented within tightly controlled guidance and not afforded the same level of independence that Local Government has elsewhere in the UK. Due to the complexity of structures, decision-making can be slow:

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[44] Ibid p74
[45] Ibid p75
[46] Ibid p76
[47] Ibid
[48] RCN consultation response p.7).

'Decision making in relation to regeneration programmes continues to be affected by sectarian divisions in society… These divisions are the basis of political structures and can lead to accusations of unfairness in resource allocation, which can make officials cautious.' [49]

Strategic planning in relation to regeneration and anti-poverty approaches are the responsibilities of the Department of Social Development (DSD) for urban areas, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) for rural areas OFMDFM also has a role in relation to Lifetime Opportunities – the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

EU programmes are administered by the Special EU Programmes Board (SEUPB), reporting to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). Responsibility for implementing most regeneration and anti-poverty measures has been devolved from regional to local level within the new Council structure (although DARD have retained centrally TRPSI and Community development funding though that may transfer in future), and the community planning processes this demands are largely seen as a promising 'opportunity for local interpretation of both regeneration and anti-poverty priorities, along with the potential for greater synergy between the two policy areas.'[50]

Castledawson, Mid Ulster

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[49] https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/jrf-regeneration-poverty-final-report.pdf p22
[50] Ibid p9

EU Programmes affecting regeneration across Northern Ireland

PEACE II (2000-06)[51] and PEACE III[52] programmes have included a number of measures relevant to regeneration within rural areas, including: 1) rural diversification 2) rural areas and capacity building and 3) tourism and rural development (SEUPB – Special EU Programmes Body, 2000).

The aims of PEACE III remained the same as Peace II, but focussed more specifically on addressing the physical segregation of communities, with a commitment to prioritise 'areas and groups that have been affected by the conflict and experience problems of segregation, marginalisation and isolation'[53] both urban and rural. (see Cultural Relations section below for more on how cultural relations affect rural areas)

Rural programmes and regeneration

Rural development has remained heavily dependent on EU programmes. INTERREG III (2000-06) and INTERREG IV (2007-13) were programmes to support economic development in (mainly rural) border regions.

> The aim of INTERREG III was 'to promote sustainable integrated regional development across the eligible region...by concentrating on the strategic dimension of cross-border development which involves and benefits local communities' (DFP, 2002:61). The approach went beyond economic development through the production of integrated local development strategies including the promotion of civic and community networking to improve social cohesion[54]

Had INTERREG any elements connected to community arts, the arts, tourism?
The LEADER+ programme (2000-06) was significant as much for its working methods as its outputs and offered support for private micro-enterprise development. The 'LEADER approach' was mainstreamed in Axis 4 of the *Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP)* 2007-13[55] – a capacity building measure to encourage innovative projects. This provided the closest approximation to a strategic approach to rural regeneration, taking forward aspects of DARD's Rural Strategy [56].

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[51] http://www.seupb.eu/Programmes2000-2006/programmes-background.aspx
[52] http://www.seupb.eu/programmes2007-2013/peaceiiiprogramme/overview.aspx
[53] www.**seupb**.eu/Libraries/Corporate.../The_Story_Of_Peace.sflb.ashx
[54] https://www.dfpni.gov.uk/topics/procurement/public-procurement-policy-northern-ireland
[55] http://www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/download/files/pub_nirdp.pdf
[56] Ibid p13

One of the four axes that the NIRDP is constructed around is to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The RDP is to continue during the 2014-20 period, albeit with a reduction in funding available for rural development and environmental initiatives.

Local councils will play a larger part in delivering the NIRDP and in supporting disadvantaged rural communities more generally, but without a complete transfer of function taking place. There are many natural links between the aims of community arts and those contained within the NIRDP axis of improving the quality of life in rural areas within the new Local Council structure, which may afford future opportunities.

Anti-poverty initiatives

The current 'Lifetime Opportunities' Anti-Poverty and Social Exclusion Strategy (OFMDFM, 2006)[57] aims to work towards the elimination of poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by 2020 and to eradicate child poverty by 2020 (both EU targets). It is structured around a number of 'challenges' (i.e. objectives), many of which are very relevant to regeneration[58]

One of these objectives is eliminating poverty from rural areas, under the responsibility of DARD. However, directly relating the Lifetime Opportunities initiative into DARD TRPSI strategic frameworks requires further complementary actions. Community arts, with applied areas of working in community developmental programmes and support, could offer such agency, albeit that capacity would have to be established and resourced beyond the existing framework.

The *Rural Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework (2009-11)[59]* aimed to 'identify where gaps exist in the fight against poverty and exclusion in rural areas, and set out how they might be addressed through innovative, partnership led approaches with other government departments and stakeholders'[60]. Four key priorities were identified: fuel poverty, community development, rural transport and access and childcare.

Successor to the Rural Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion framework is *Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework*.[61] Those areas which show the greatest synergies between the aims of

[57] http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/Lifetime%20Opportunities%20NI.pdf
[58] https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/jrf-regeneration-poverty-final-report.pdf - p14
[59] https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/jrf-regeneration-poverty-NI.pdf - p19

[60] Ibid p3
[61] https://www.dardni.gov.uk/publications/tackling-rural-poverty-and-social-isolation-framework

community arts and the Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework are: 1) CERI – Contacting Elderly Rural Isolated Project, which has a befriending programme; 2) Rural Community Development – which aims, amongst others to build capacity. Seven lead service providers provide a local development support and advice service throughout Northern Ireland; and 3) The Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme. This develops business potential among vulnerable young people in rural areas, who are recruited into the Programme through various outreach events and workshops. There is a focus on upskilling, networking, mentoring and sharing of ideas to stimulate business creation.

Within the new local council structure there will be scope for local government to play a larger part in delivering both regeneration and anti-poverty objectives with the input of local communities in the community planning process. This has generally been welcomed, albeit with some caution.

> *The new councils have scope to incorporate anti-poverty objectives more overtly into their regeneration strategies and to include specific income poverty outcomes in their evaluation approach, along with increasing community involvement in the policy area through the community planning process. However, the complexity of Northern Ireland's public administration system may well continue to prevent effective joined up action.[62]*

This has been correctly identified as having the potential to realise a cross-cutting role for the arts and community-based arts provision in particular to support inclusive community planning inputs and outputs, facilitating the establishment of this new council-based remit.

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[62] https://www.dardni.gov.uk/publications/tackling-rural-poverty-and-social-isolation-framework - p23

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure

'Northern Ireland's first regional strategic approach to the regeneration of disadvantaged areas was set out in *People and Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (DSD, 2003b).*' [63] However, given that the DSD is responsible for urban regeneration, and that implementation was through Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) within the most deprived ten per cent of urban areas, this strategic approach did not consider regeneration in rural areas.

The Nobel (Noble) Index of Multiple Deprivation, which was used to determine the most deprived areas, has since acknowledged that the measures used to define multiple deprivation may be inappropriate for measuring deprivation in rural areas, and that this needs to be investigated further.[64]

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 [65]identified small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland. It updated and replaced the NIMDM 2005 as the official measure of deprivation in Northern Ireland. It is a weighted combination of the seven domains of deprivation, measuring Income and Employment Deprivation (50% weighting); Health Deprivation and Disability and Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (30% weighting); the remainder is made up of deprivation in the areas of Proximity to Services, Living Environment and Crime & Disorder.

The main NIMDM 2010 results were presented at the Super Output Area (SOA) geography which contain an average of 2,000 people. There are 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland. Output Area (OA) measures were also produced. Output Areas have an average population of 350 people. There are 5,022 Output Areas in Northern Ireland. Deprivation measured at the SOA level was seen as problematic for rural areas, which are not so likely to have spatially bound pockets of multiple deprivation.

> *Although SOAs (Super Output Areas) were designed to have similar population sizes to aid comparisons across Northern Ireland, due to the smaller geographical size and the relatively homogenous populations of urban areas compared to rural areas, small area concentrations of deprivation are more readily identified in urban areas than rural areas. This should be noted when comparing deprivation measures in urban and rural areas. It may also be more appropriate when assessing deprivation in rural areas to focus on the Output Area results.[66]*

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[63] Ibid p9
[64] http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/updateof2005measures/nimdm_2010_report.pdf - p21-22
[65] ibid
[66] Ibid p39

The OA measures also identified pockets of deprivation within rural areas, showing fifteen rural OAs in the 10% most deprived OAs in Northern Ireland. [67]

Cultural Relations

Katherine Side argues in her article 'Re-Assessing Rural Conflict: Rituals, Symbols and Commemorations in the Moyle District, Northern Ireland', that

'assertions about the absence of sectarianism and local conflict are problematic because they exclude rural areas from key policy documents related to community relations and, because they permit the construction of surface appearances of peaceful co-existence and policy adherence, while at the same time, permitting the continuation of local sectarianism and conflict.' [68]
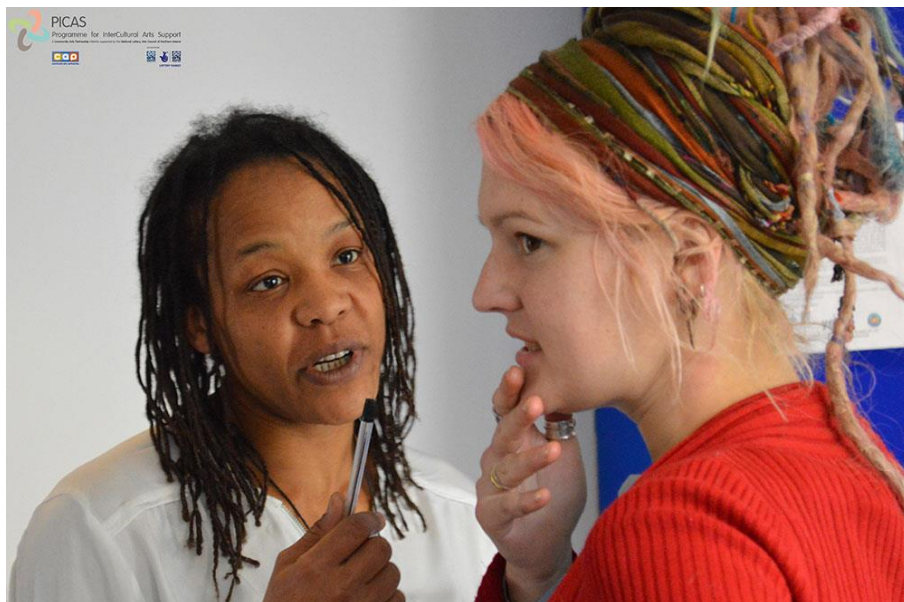
Participants from the Programme for Intercultural Arts Support

There is little research that has been done on rural areas and the conflict. There is, understandably, a larger focus that has been given to assessing the effects of the conflict on urban areas, given that almost half of the deaths during the conflict happened in Belfast[69], and the majority of the population of Northern Ireland resides in urban areas.

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[67] Ibid p56
[68] http://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/930/210 - p102
[69] http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/sutton/

Conversely, rural areas in Northern Ireland exhibited lower rates of conflict related death and, in attitudinal surveys, they are assumed to have lower rates of violence, fewer sectarian incidents, to be more integrated and to exhibit better community relations.[70]

The assumption here would seem to be that lack of violence is equal to good community relations. This, of course, is not a logical conclusion and one not supported by the outcomes of the research carried out through the Exploring Change project as it does not address ambivalence, avoidance, denial, lack of interaction, lack of engagement and understanding of other communities.

Recently, there has been an increased public awareness and 'emphasis on the less tangible, and - to a degree – concealed, individual and social consequences of enduring conflict and violence', as indicated by the Arts Council Northern Ireland Re-Imaging project [71]

The research focus on urban areas has also led to the creation of policy which neglects the issues faced by rural areas, and their needs in addressing integrated community relations.

> *It leads to an under examination of the dailiness of urban life, says relatively little about urban variation and, overlooks the extent to which a majority of individuals report being unaffected by conflict[72]*

> *It also limits rural inclusion.[73]*

There are three key policy documents for improving community relations: A Shared Future (OFMDFM, 2005);[74] The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (OFMDFM, 2010);[75] and The Racial Equality Strategy (OFMDFM, 2014)[76]. However, they contain few references to rural contexts.

> *Current government policy on rural communities, including The Programme for Government, the Rural Development Programme, the Rural Development Strategy, and Planning, Reform and Transport Strategy are oriented more towards sustaining the economic basis of rural communities rather than addressing the realities of segregation and sectarian division that pervade many areas. [77]*

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[70] http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/csc/reports/murtagh99.htm
[71] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/visual-arts1/re-imaging-communities/publications
[72] http://www.methodologicalinnovations.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/6.-Mcloughlin-pp64-77.pdf
[73] http://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/930/210 - p106

[74] https://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ofmdfm_dev/a-shared-future-policy-2005.pdf
[75] http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/ofmdfm/ofmdfm_270710_sharing.pdf
[76] https://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publications/racial-equality-strategy-2015-2025
[77] Bell, J., Jarman, N., & Harvey, B. (2010). *Beyond Belfast: Contested spaces*

The effect of such policies is to construct 'surface appearances of peaceful coexistence and policy adherence in rural contexts, which, at the same time, permit the continuation of sectarianism and conflict...' [78]

According to Tony Macaulay, what is needed is a...

> *...flexible, needs led, people centred, community development approach [which] is effective in stimulating, supporting and progressing peace building in rural communities and is an essential part of the community development process.* [79]

An outcome of the RCN Rural Enabler Programme 2010-2013, the research paper *Rural Communities...Polite avoidance and denial – rhetoric or reality* (Macaulay, 2013)[80] indicates that key to developing functional and productive cultural relations within rural areas are: working with a traditional way of life; addressing invisible interfaces; providing personal support; working in dispersed communities; working with institutions; working with the dynamics of majorities and minorities; and the investment of time[81]

Macaulay also states that work needs to be long term, and requires attention and sensitivity to building trust and relationships, and has to have a focus on building capacity, confidence and understanding of community development.[82]

There has been recent evidence to support the positive outcomes of community arts projects in peace-building in urban areas in Northern Ireland.[83]

Beyond that there has been *"Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts, a review; Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012-15*, 2012).[84]

Community Arts offers a context in which the needs of rural areas can be acknowledged and addressed in developing positive and lasting cultural relations.

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[78] http://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/930/210 - p104
[79] http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org/DataEditorUploads/Polite_avoidance.pdf
[80] ibid
[81] Ibid p13-14
[82] Ibid p2
[83] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Re-Imaging_Final_Evaluation.pdf
[84] *Measuring the economic and social impact of the arts, a review; Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012-15*, 2012

Review of Public Administration

2015 is a year in which dramatic changes to local government structures take place. As of the 1st April 2015, the pre-existing twenty-six districts have been rationalised into 11 new 'super-councils'. The previous pattern of local government in Northern Ireland, with 26 councils, was established in 1973 by the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 and the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to replace the previous system established by the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898.

According to the Department of the environment, "[t]he new councils will be stronger, more efficient and will deliver more effective services. They will be citizen focused, responding to the needs, aspirations and concerns of their communities." [85]

Within the new council structures, local government has a duty to work with communities in order to "develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area", through the process of community planning.

Largely based on the Scottish model[86], and defined in Audit Scotland's Report "Community Planning: An Initial Review" as "the process through which public sector organisations work together and with

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[85] http://www.doeni.gov.uk/local_government_reform
[86] Department of the Environment Community Planning Subgroup Recommendation one, to the Taskforce, June 2006 [online] available from: http://www.flga.org.uk/uploads/docs/lgrt_cp_recommendations_to_the_taskforce.pdf

local communities and the voluntary sector, to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources", this collaboration in community planning has the potential to empower local communities to make decisions over issues which affect them.

Back in 2008, the then Minister of Environment, Mrs Arlene Foster, laid out the components of community planning in a statement to the Assembly. These included:

- an effective, statute-based Community Planning process led and facilitated by the new councils;
- a clear statutory requirement on all other public bodies including policing, health and education bodies to participate in and support the Community Planning process;
- a clear duty placed on councils to engage with local communities to produce a community plan.

With the new council structure in place, the framework thus now exists by which communities can work together with Councils, departments and statutory bodies in order to implement a shared vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of their members.

It is imperative that development of rural community arts work undertaken by CAP and others is mindful of how it can be strategically employed to further the development of arts strategies alongside Arts Council NI (see chapter four for ACNI response to the new council structure) and support the new Councils as they implement their community planning strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW:

THE ARTS IN SOCIAL CHANGE AND
REGENERATION

THE VALUE OF THE ARTS IN CONTEXT

Literature Review – The arts in social change and regeneration. The value of the arts in context

What is the role of the arts? What is their value within society? Can they really bring about social change and regeneration? To what extent should they be funded? These are many of the questions which frame a larger debate about the 'usefulness' and 'intrinsic moral good' of the arts in society.

The Ballinderry Memorial Hall Women's Art Group participant in CAP's "Masque" project.

Eleonora Belfiore discusses the value of the arts, and how socially they are perceived in contemporary British society. She argues that to a large extent within policy making, economic value arguments within a 'neoliberal monoculture' have become the primary focus [87]

She quotes Michaels as saying:

In these early decades of the twenty-first century, the master story is economic; economic beliefs, values and assumptions are shaping how we feel, think, and act. The beliefs, values and assumptions that make up the economic story aren't inherently right or wrong; they're just a single perspective on the nature of reality. In a mono-culture though, that single perspective becomes so engrained as the only reasonable reality that we begin to forget our other stories, and fail to see the monoculture in its totality, never mind question it. [88]

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[87] http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/60356/ - p106
[88] Ibid p 109

If we look at Barnardo's work on Community Arts we see a similar perspective.[89]

With regards Belfiore, she and Bennett are critical of arts institutions themselves for buying into this economic valuing of the arts and how their impact is measured without scrutiny, arguing that:

> *Instead of a rigorous exploration of the complex issues involved, a rather simplistic debate has taken place, which has focused on measurable "impacts" of the arts and which has left a number of fundamental assumptions unchallenged. This, in part, can be attributed to the imperatives of "evidence-based policy making", which has become something of an orthodoxy in Britain in most areas of domestic policy and which has therefore to a large extent determined the terms of the public debate about the arts. [90]*

Instead, Belfiore argues for a wider discussion which moves 'beyond the impact debate's limiting aspects and economistic framing', and one which dares to 'consider not just how arts and humanities research might create public value, but also how and why it might fail to do so' [91]

She and Bennett suggest adding depth to cultural policy debate, through producing 'a taxonomy of impacts and a classification of the various claims that have been made, over time, for how the arts affect both individuals and society,' thus developing a better understanding of the role of the arts in contemporary society, beyond performance measurement and target setting.[92]

It is through this lens which the following research 'impacts' of the Exploring Change research should be viewed – not as simplistic measurable outputs, but within a more complex reading of how communities see themselves, cross-referenced against the artistic, human and personal values that artists bring to the process, as well as the more structured frameworks and economic considerations that arts centres and government organisations bring to bear.

Belfiore and Bennett suggest that the simplistic way in which the value of the arts is framed within contemporary policy debates is based, on six assumptions about the arts:

1) art can be defined;

2) experience of the arts is commensurate;

3) art produces positive social impacts;

4) these positive impacts can be proved

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[89] http://www.barnardos.org.uk/commarts.pdf
[90] http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/53054/ p136-137
[91] Ibid p109
[92] http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/53054/ - p110

5) proof of impacts can safeguard funding and

6) a new language is needed for discussing the value of the arts.[93]

Once we understand that

a) the arts lend themselves to defying definition;

b) everyone's experience of the arts is different;

c) art can be used towards a negative as well as a positive impact in shaping people's beliefs and sense of identity;

d) impact can't always be 'measured' and 'proved';

e) however much proof is demonstrated, funding within the arts is generally precarious and

f) in linking a "new language" closely to funding issues, there is a danger that we will end up not with a 'more nuanced understanding of the value of the arts but with more advocacy disguised as research and yet another round of policy-based evidence making.' [94]

There is certainly a need for a more nuanced discussion of the value of the arts, particularly within the predominantly conservative, neo-liberalist framework of Northern Irish politics, where impact measurement has been inextricably linked to economic concerns. Deeper nuances within outcomes frameworks may serve to offer greater platforms for sustaining impactful art-making.

ArtsMatterNI Stormont Rally in November 2015

[93] Ibid pps136-138
[94] Ibid p138

In light of the recent drastic funding cuts to the arts in Northern Ireland, whilst the Northern Ireland Executive's outgoing Programme for Government paid lip service to the arts and culture *"as instruments for positive change"* [95] in tackling social issues, and enjoys piggybacking on the "transformative power of culture, arts and leisure",[96] it cannot quite summon the belief in the value of the arts needed to translate such recognition into increased and strategically more advantageous investment, there is a great need to understand the wider value and impact of the arts.

The Exploring Change research carried out in preparation for this report is intended to shed light on how communities, artists and organisations value Community Arts, and through a triangulation of the information gleaned, will help to highlight a more complex picture of the impact that engaging with Community Arts has had and continues to have on people's lives within rural communities.

Community Arts – Arts for social change

Of course, the debate on whether the arts can and does have an impact for the greater social good is extremely pertinent to Community Arts, as defined in the introduction as:

> *…a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice.[97]*

Community Arts practice is therefore by definition a form of artistic activity which claims to develop original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change. In this way, Community Arts has a far more specific and defined meaning compared to what is traditionally known as 'Art' or 'Performance'.

It cannot be emphasised enough how important this distinction is in considering the impact of Community Arts. This is not the art synonymous of an elite or a particular niche which excludes by demanding prior knowledge or education, but art which can be found in the everyday – art emanating from the creativity which as human beings we are born with and lies within us all.

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[95] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf
[96] ibid
[97] http://comartspartner.org/

As Marx W. Wartofsky claims "[i]t is in the self-recognition of […] creative capacity that human beings come to know themselves as human…"[98] Without this understanding of 'art', we are not able to realise our full potential, or truly comprehend our humanity.

However, although this definition goes some way to narrowing the field of this genre of arts practice, in other ways it also hides a plethora of art forms, arts practices and community contexts: community arts; community arts for social change; interventionist arts; arts in education; arts for rural development; participatory arts practice; arts practice for conflict resolution/conciliation; arts in prison; reminiscence arts, etc.

What each of these has in common though, is the intersection between the arts and communities who seek to employ the arts for particular reasons to do with their local circumstances. These could be social, for personal development, for political and/or advocacy reasons, or could be for wider social change.

Over recent years relatively little has been written on Community Arts in Northern Ireland. There have been detailed studies by Matt Jennings, Gerri Moriarty and David Grant, stretching back to 1993, mostly of community theatre experiences, or more recently, submissions to government committee or discrete programme evaluations on behalf of funders or ALBs. A brief history of a more general Community Arts development can be found CAP's "Between Ourselves" text (edited by Dr Shelley Tracey and Conor Shields[99]) and CAP's "Coming of Age"[100]. Conor Shields says "The relationship between what goes on in a community and what is reflected in community arts is seldom absolute,

Paiste, the last serpent in Ireland. Art piece in Limavady, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

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[98] http://www.springer.com/gb/book/9789027707369
[99] Between Ourselves: exploring interculturalism through intercommunity creative practice ISBN 9-780993-429804, 2015
[100] Coming of Age: The shared legacy of community arts 2011 ISBN9-771473-968012

but always relevant. The development of new ways to engage a society in articulating what might be the greatest present challenge, or the most contentious issue, or indeed, the most pressing cause for celebration; these are all inherently appropriate spaces for community arts to relate, reflect and develop."

Conor Shields continues:

"Community arts practice is concerned not only with such standard aesthetic preoccupations as the function of beauty and sublimity in art, but with the relations between art and society. Community arts wants to support transformation. It wants to harness that power to produce positive change in the world. Artists have highly developed analytical skills that give them the ability to offer different perspectives, both actually and philosophically. When these skills are incorporated into a purposeful process that includes many views, voices and opinions, it becomes the essential core of the creative dialogue within community arts processes. All aesthetic considerations are now amplified with other considerations. The concerns, ideals, ambitions and contexts of the participants are at play. In community arts, enabling people to be artists and as such empowering the creative ability to reflect and create is key. Then, as the definition runs, this can be applied to a range of circumstances and potentials. Because of this ability, community arts can reach and support people where they are. It is not encumbered by predetermined artistic ritual or history. There is real autonomy in the process and it can offer those, particularly those on the margins, an attractive, engaging and highly productive way to express that requires no more than their active willingness to take part.

Northern Ireland has known only too well the depth of contention within our relatively recent social history, incorporating the conflict known to many as "The Troubles" and the accompanying hardship and despair that has been visited upon successive generations. Without wishing to offer commentary on ancient and modern history, it has been the undoubted case that for the most marginalised communities, there has been an enduring struggle for equality of opportunity and access to, not only the arts, but perhaps all fundamental services and opportunities. Community arts in Northern Ireland has always championed the need for greater levels of opportunity to promote inclusion across a range of issues and in so doing, has often been instrumental in developing both a vocabulary of change and transformation as much as assisting in the development and communication of ideas and issues, celebrations and interventions."

In Martin Lynch's article 'The history of community arts in Northern Ireland' [101] in which he attributes the roots of the discipline in the 1970's and '80's to the working classes, and 'the emergence of

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[101] http://comartspartner.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/The-history-of-community-arts-in-Northern-Ireland.pdf

individuals from a society where education was no longer the privilege of the middle and upper classes' [102]thus changing who had access to the arts.

The haphazard emergence of initial groups and initiatives wasn't consolidated until the 1990's when funding (first through Making Belfast Work, a 'government social-regeneration quango'[103] and then through the Arts Council Northern Ireland) was made available, thus securing the sector for the foreseeable future.

Lynch sees community arts as predominantly a vehicle to '…give voice via the arts to huge sections of our society that previously had none…' and has a social impact throughout Northern Ireland.[104] However, his claim that the term Community Arts is widely and clearly understood in 'government departments, statutory agencies, local councils, the voluntary and community sectors, and most especially…in communities' is somewhat premature.[105] The recent debilitating funding cuts to the arts from Stormont, alongside the evidence gathered through the Exploring Change research from all sections of the community arts sector suggest conflict over and a considerable confusion as to the definition of community arts, what it can achieve, and the extent to which it is valued within society.

Again, the distinction that Lynch makes between 'high art' and community art, and how it is employed, is crucial to understanding the possible impact and value of Community Arts. [106]

If art can be used as a powerful tool for both negative (negative propaganda and manipulation, reinforcing of negative stereotypes and entrenched, inflexible traditional identities which reinforce conflict amongst communities) and positive outcomes (to instil self-empowerment, autonomy and confidence within communities), then there is even more reason for governing institutions to recognise their responsibility for promoting art forms which have a positive impact, whilst countering and minimising those which have a negative impact. And impact is inextricably linked to an individual, their background, and the personal perceptions they hold:

> *…as numerous studies have shown, from Pierre Bourdieu to Paul Willis, the value or*
> *impact of a work of art will vary enormously, according to all the factors that make up*
> *a person's identity, including age, class, health, wealth and so on.[107]*

As Community Arts are carried out within local communities, generally in small groups, and often in relation to community identity issues, the engagement with, the value and impact of the work have

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[102] Ibid p57
[103] Ibid p61
[104] Ibid p63
[105] Ibid p65
[106] Ibid p 70
[107] http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/53054/ p136-137

the potential to be infinitely greater than addressing mere access issues, such as making sure there is an arts venue within twenty miles of a community, one of the main access aims of the ACNI in the past two[108] five-year strategic plans. [109] Beyond strategic plans, interventions such as 'Barriers to Access to Disabled People to the Arts' research, and the Arts Council engagement strategies relating to Intercultural Arts and Arts and Older People, the Equality Charter, the Equality Plan, the Disability Action Plan have bolstered ACNI's core aim of the five-year arts strategy to 'Promote Access'.

In "Between Ourselves" Conor Shields examines community connectedness: "Our substantive meaning of community is a group or network of persons who are connected to each other by a relatively stable set of social relations that extends beyond immediate family or genetic ties, and who mutually define that relationship as important to their social identity and practice. But of course, these social relations do not necessarily have to be framed in the physical world – increasingly now, we are members of on-line or virtual communities where we are united relationally by a set of ideas, or notions and affiliations that spring from them. Where that relative stability falters, offers an opportunity for exploration, support and development. Where it fails, the emergence of new cultural distinctions that have the power to make distinct differences can have a range of potential effects."

However, why and how Community Arts programmes are carried out is also of vital importance as to whether they have a positive or negative impact upon participant-artists, as outlined by Helen Sharkey in the *Participatory Arts Archive[110]* and Gerri Moriarty's article 'Community arts and the quality issue' (2004).[111] The importance of 'Good Practice' within community arts is therefore vital, and one that is discussed in more depth within Segment 11.

Participatory Arts Archive – an overview of participatory arts in Northern Ireland (including community arts)

Sharkey refers to Participatory Arts as non-professional arts practice and production, outside of the established professional arts arena or marketplace, incorporating the voluntary art sector and the community art sector. She also make the distinction between the 'high' arts and what she terms 'socially engaged artists', and the problems artists face in terms of having their work recognised within community contexts [112]

This would seem to be particularly pertinent for those artists living and working in rural communities, who have no formal qualifications, but whose body of work comes from the experience of living and

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[108] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/documents/aboutus/5YearStrategy2007-2012.pdf
[109] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/ambitions-for-the-arts-5-year-strategy.pdf - p7
[110] http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.486958 – pps28-31
[111] "*Community Arts and the Quality Issue*," in Sandy Fitzgerald, ed. An *Outburst of Freshness*: *Community Arts* in Ireland – A Reader.
[112] http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.486958

living with their art. The Participatory Arts Archive is a useful historical document, as it gives an archive of practice within Northern Ireland over the past 100 years.

The labels attached to 'community arts' and 'socially engaged arts' tend to bleed into one another, and are used often interchangeably. Community arts and inclusion seems to be an umbrella term for arts and social justice, arts and health, arts and ethnic minorities, arts and disability, and arts in education, amongst others. The term community development is equally used in a variety of different ways, from building capacity, to social change, to engaging communities in advocacy issues.

The following aims to offer an overview of some of these terms, as defined by this piece of research.

'Socially engaged arts' or 'community arts' is investigated in terms of the umbrella term social inclusion, before being broken down into further categories in order to highlight some of the ways in which community arts have impacted and are continuing to impact upon communities within Northern Ireland. Where evidence exists, a particular focus is placed on how they impact upon rural communities. These categories are: community arts and community relations; community arts and health; community arts for social change (community development); community arts and culture and community arts and heritage. In the absence of a comprehensive overview of each of these categories, at least one example has been chosen, which offers documentary evidence, to highlight the impact of community arts within that particular sub-category.

Community arts and inclusion – Examining Social Inclusion in the arts in Northern Ireland.

Social exclusion is closely linked to a relative definition of poverty and involves 'people being marginalized or excluded from participation in education, work and community life, and from access to services and other aspects of life seen as part of being a full and participating member of mainstream society.'[113] Social exclusion, although closely related to poverty, is different in that it focusses attention of a broad range of factors *and processes* preventing an individual's or group's participation within society (not just economic factors), including the opportunity to participate fully in society, social mobility, education, access to social networks, rural isolation etc.

In rural areas, social exclusion is experienced particularly through lack of access to key services, social networks and transportation, as well as others.[114] Social inclusion, therefore is the process by which social exclusion is countered within any given society.

Spectrum Women's Autism Group, from Dungannon, meets the Lord Mayor, Arder Carson, at Belfast City Hall

Examining social inclusion in the arts in Northern Ireland

The 2013 Northern Ireland Assembly publication *Examining social inclusion in the arts in Northern Ireland* states that while there is (understandably) 'little 'hard' evidence for a direct, causal link between cultural engagement and greater social inclusion', specific interventions do link participation in the arts with, for example, reducing feelings of loneliness in older participants, diverting younger people from anti-social behaviour and helping to reduce anxiety in mental health patients. [115]

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[113] Browne 2005: p54
[114] Giddens et al 2007: p249
[115] Hull, 2013: p3

There seems, however, to be a focus on superficial access to the arts within areas of deprivation (i.e. the distance someone may have to travel to reach an arts centre), and clearly measurable social outcomes from an isolated, external point of view, rather than evidence from participants themselves, and a more complex approach to seeing the arts as part of a bigger picture.

Whilst it may not be 'measurable' how much someone's isolation has been reduced, for example, by taking part in a project which brings people together on a weekly basis there is no doubt that participants are not isolated for the time they are with their co-creators. Long-term benefits would be dependent on long-term funding for projects, how integrated they are within an individual's wider support networks, the perceived success of people taking part, how well planned and facilitated the project was, etc. Attendance at events, ticket sales and distance to the nearest art centre are therefore a poor measure for impact upon social inclusion.

The research asks the question: 'how socially inclusive are the arts?' However, a more appropriate question may be 'to what extent are the arts used inclusively'. Surely the arts have the potential to be used to promote social inclusion only to the extent that the commissioning institutions, organisations and artists, as well as the participants, carefully frame them for that purpose. There is clearly a huge need for a more in depth, wide-ranging consideration of the impact of the arts, which considers a deeper analysis of the affects and benefits of the arts (and in this particular case, community arts) on marginalised populations (in this case, rural populations) beyond attendance at events and distance from arts activities, and includes the voices of participants themselves.

Community arts and health – Community arts and dementia (as an example of arts and inclusion)

Community Arts Partnership has actively been involved in developing projects with older people and people with dementia over the past few years, and has also produced research outlining the value of the arts within this context.

There is an increasing body of evidence highlighting the value of meaningful activity and the arts for people with dementia. [116] Marmot also discussed this issue in his influential Marmot Review, [117] and further in depth discussion can be found using Anglia Ruskin's research.[118]

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[116] https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/improving-dementia-services-2011.pdf
[117] Marmot, M (2010) Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England

[118] Anglia Ruskin / UCLAN research team (2007) Mental health, social inclusion and arts: Developing the evidence base, final report London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport/ Department of Health

What the arts, and in particular community arts, can offer is a positive lens through which to understand the person first, by looking at what they *can* do rather than what they can't, which is most often how they are viewed.

This is vitally important as a starting point for implementing the values and principles as outlined by the DHSSPS report[119] But more than this, community arts offers a way to cut through the rhetoric of change to the practice of action and transformation.

> [P]eople living with dementia are learning every day, incorporating names, places and many of the positive and negative experiences of their daily life and care. We tend not to see this because we focus on deficits, but what if our focus shifted to cultivating strength through creative engagement? [120]

Meaningful activity can delay the onset of dementia, and the more the mind is occupied meaningfully, the greater the chances that the dementing process can be slowed down once it has already started. Additionally, it is the sense of 'connectedness', both with good feelings experienced in the past and thus with a sense of self, and to other people, that community arts is particularly good at promoting.

Increasing a sense of connectedness can also help to reduce stress, leading to a decrease in behaviour that challenges. Patients are less likely, for example, to wander (try to get home). Meaningful arts activity can help to relieve boredom, distress and a sense of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. If activity involves family members, it can also lead to more engaging and meaningful relationships.

Numerous examples of good practice within community arts when working with people with dementia, and of networks in the field which are gaining an influential voice already exist. However, in rural locations where older people are more likely to suffer isolation and lack the capacity to be involved with their local communities, this takes on an even greater importance.

Community Arts and community relations - Re-imaging Communities

A major piece of recent research/evaluation to take place regarding the arts and conflict is the Arts Council commissioned evaluation of the Re-imaging Communities programme. The programme supported (and at the time of writing still continues to support) communities across Northern Ireland

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[119] Ibid FN 28
[120] Lee, H and Adams, T (2011) Creative Approaches in Dementia Care, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan – pxiii

and the border areas wishing to tackle signs of sectarianism and racism. Each project provides opportunities for communities to promote tolerance and understanding through the arts.

The 2009 evaluation report (Independent Research Solutions), and the evidence contained within it, claimed considerable success in using the arts to remove symbols of sectarian aggression, to address and strengthen community relations, build capacity, and promote the arts.

The report also maintains to have implications for the whole of Northern Ireland:

> *The regeneration programme signalled the emergence of a serious and sustained attempt to establish a process of urban and rural change across Northern Ireland, by taking advantage of the unique contribution that the arts can make to dealing with social and economic questions, such as social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal and economic productivity [121]*

However, by very definition of its concentration on visible signs of sectarianism (and by self-admission that this is particularly relevant to Belfast), one overall effect is that rural communities have been side-lined within this research, as the signs of sectarianism tend to be 'invisible' or covert.

Dr Adrian Johnston (IFI), Roisin Mc Donough, (Arts Council of Northern Ireland) and Pat Colgan (SEUPB), join Deputy First Minister, Martin Mc Guinness MLA for the launch of the Building Peace through the Arts - Re-Imaging Communities programme

The focus of 'A shared future' (OFMDFM), from which the Re-Imaging Communities project emerged, placed this focus on visible signs. However, there are signs and symbols which only occur visibly in rural areas at particular times (for example, parades, festivals, and public holidays), and are not present in communities at other times.

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[121] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publications-documents/Re-Imaging_Final_Evaluation.pdf

The second phase of the programme, entitled Building Peace through the Arts: Re-Imaging Communities Programme, focused on rural communities and 'invisible signs of sectarianism', which cites "place making" as defined by the Project for Public Places in USA[122] and a variety of "participative community arts" approaches, [123] where 50% of resident survey respondents thought community arts projects are effective in challenging visible and hidden signs of racism & sectarianism. The report also states that artists required further training in community arts.

So, of course, the visible symbols of associations with sports teams (for example football shirts), or names of roads, and attendance at schools which indicate division, are often evident. Where flags and murals are removed in towns and cities, they are replaced with something, but where symbols are absent in rural areas, this does not mean that communities are positively interacting with one another. The political nature of such symbols in rural areas is often not deconstructed, recognised, reflected upon or acknowledged as having the potential to create antagonism amongst other communities, as they are not seen in relation to anything else. The **Exploring Change** research indicated that there is a naivety and lack of cultural awareness or self-knowledge that can result from cultural isolation – even if a different community lives in the neighbouring village. Whilst interventions like phase II of Re-Imaging actively target just such conditions, through time-limited strategic collaborative programmes, the challenge to create shared spaces, investigate cultural identity and create positive, shared symbols, murals and emblems within rural areas certainly requires further research and programme development. Creating, literally, a deeper understanding of the nature of cultural identity in rural Northern Ireland would be of great benefit in deconstructing cultural relations. The evaluative report states: "The resident surveys also highlight differences in the interpretation of cultural symbols/displays as positive or negative within the same community. However, where such outwards signs are minimal, sectarian/racists attitudes and lack of integration have been identified."…Non-visible sectarian/racist attitudes and lack of integration between different religions and nationalities was highlighted by participants and residents as being the most dominant problem in many areas…Although there have been many examples of good practice using targeted outreach which helped to increase cross-community mobility… many Steering Panels have reported difficulties in getting minority groups involved. This does appear to highlight a social disconnect that will require ongoing efforts to address." [124]

In addition, the report asserts that "DCAL, alongside the Arts Council, is currently working on developing an Arts and Culture Strategy 2016-26. This will look at the potential of the arts and culture

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[122] http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/
[123] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/publicationsdocuments/BPttA_Final_Programme_Evaluation.pdf
[124] Ibid p.87

sector as a driver for the achievement of broader social and economic goals such as social inclusion and cohesion, urban regeneration, tourism, inward investment, employment, development of high added value creative industries, education and health." (p96) without any express mention of rural considerations.

Community arts and heritage

Many of the projects that CAP undertakes in rural areas have an element of cultural heritage to them. They are (in this case) about taking inspiration from the surrounding area and recreating something new and lasting as a legacy to the community. There is little overtly political connection within these artistic projects, but the potential is there to explore rural identity, self in relation to local community, and to question these notions on a wider scale, as well as within the context of a 'global' community.

As Elizabeth Crooke states in her article 'The politics of community heritage: motivations, authority and control' '[c]ommunity and heritage are not only malleable concepts; they are also highly emotive, closely guarded and are used to stake control and define authority.' [125]

It is important that such concepts can be questioned and reinterpreted by individuals and groups within rural communities, in order to develop and express new and emerging identities from within, and challenge definitions of community and ownership of histories imposed or received. The potential for community development and community relations work to be developed through arts and heritage projects in conjunction with local museums and local centres displaying artwork in rural areas is worth exploring. In particular, exploring rural identity and rural community relations may find an outlet in this way. As previously stated, little research material exists in terms of rural areas in Northern Ireland and the impact of the conflict, and even less in relation to the arts and conflict within this context. With the strong links that rural areas have with local community development associations, and their involvement with the arts, there is currently a substantial untapped opportunity to explore rural community relations.

Community Arts for Community Development

If the *aim* within community arts as defined above is inclusion, the *method* is based on the principles of community development. It is where community, arts practice and community development intersect. Although the arts and community development share many principles, values and aims,

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[125] http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13527250903441705

both are terms which are not widely understood outside of, or even within organisations which identify as being community arts based, and even more so in Northern Ireland.

So, what exactly is meant by community development?

Based on the Community Development National Occupational Guidelines (CDNOS), the RCN defines community development as follows:

> *Community development is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion. The process enables people to organise and work together to:*
> *• Identify their own needs and aspirations*
> *• Take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives*
> *• Improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part [126]*

Amongst the many benefits of community development for the communities and practitioners who embody its values, are: the building of strong and shared communities; the tackling of inequality and disadvantage; the creation of engaged and influential communities; and the development of creative and innovative communities. [127]

Crucially, within community development outcomes, as in those of the community arts, value is placed not just on economic and tangible measurements, but takes a much wider view:

> *Capturing and measuring qualitative change should be accepted as an important component of community development. This does not absolve those involved from disregarding more 'output' focused indicators. However, it does provide merit in developing a new approach which takes account of the wider and sometimes less tangible benefits of community development. Material benefits such as reduced crime, improved health or increased employment within a community are all worthy and justifiable indicators. However, these need to be balanced with outcomes which focus on measuring the level of capacity, strength of relationships and formation of networks within communities as a result of community development. [128]*

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[126] http://www.fcdl.org.uk/publications/publications-for-download/guide-to-cdnos-2009 and http://www.fcdl.org.uk/ and Rural Community Network 2012: 10).
[127] Rural Community Network 2012: 11
[128] Rural Community Network 2012: 12

Thus, community development processes, as with those of community arts, help to embody and strengthen a more holistic, complex idea of values and community outcomes.

Intercultural development workshop

Community Development and Community planning

The recent changes in Council structure in Northern Ireland are particularly interesting from a community arts and community development perspective because of the legal duty now placed upon local government to engage in community planning.

Community planning has a strong connection with community development, and closely reflects the same underpinning values. The perceived benefits are similar across key areas of community engagement, participation and empowerment.

However, in order to be effective, community planning requires a strong community support infrastructure, in which investments are made to empower communities through developing knowledge, skills, capacity and strong networks. The positive effects on community development support on communities, and the negative effects of not investing therein are outlined in Belfast City Council's *Community Development Strategy 2012-2015*[129]

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[129] Belfast City Council's *Community Development Strategy 2012-2015*

(See also the *Community Planning Toolkit* developed by Community Places in order to support the community and voluntary sectors' involvement in future Community Planning processes: www.communityplanningtoolkit.org).[130]

It is of vital importance that local councils are made aware both of the ways in which community arts can, and already do, support community development and community planning, and can be instrumental in developing capacity within community organisations. In this way, community arts now has the opportunity to become integral to the processes of community planning as they are being developed. This is particularly vital given that there is currently no shared understanding within either the statutory sector or the local community and voluntary sectors of what is meant by community development – community arts has a responsibility to make sure that it is the principles of community development which are adhered to, and not merely community engagement:

> *Community engagement is generally initiated by agencies or people in positions of power to seek community involvement in planning and reviewing services or engaging in democratic life… However community development isn't merely a tool for community engagement; it starts from communities' own concerns.* [131]

Therefore, the principles of community development, as facilitated through community arts, enable real power for communities working alongside other agencies within the community planning process.

There is significant evidence for the ways in which community arts strengthen and support community development processes, as evidenced by Matarasso in relation to rural touring and Living Heritage programmes[132] (Matarasso 2007). He refers to a whole host of benefits[133] (2007: 456-7), including skills development, social capital and the development of organisations from informal associations to social enterprises through these skills; self-managed cultural programmes which tend to remain within their capacity to deliver what they set out to; cultural projects that don't see culture as an add-on, but is integral to the development of the work. The programmes tend to focus on community assets, not problems, and deal with cultural elements which are cherished by the communities.

Matarasso states that

'[c]ommunity cultural projects are effective when they centre on action that people care about and are developmental rather than remedial in conception' and finally, that *'cultural projects give people*

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[130] www.communityplanningtoolkit.org
[131] *Belfast City Council 2012: 23*
[132] Matarasso 2007
[133] Ibid pps456-7

access to a means of self-expression, even of self-definition, that no other form of collective action offers.' [134] *(2007: 457).*

Community arts and culture

The concept of community arts and culture brings us full circle to the way in which values are embedded within society. Hawkes speaking in the summary of *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning* [135] states:

> *A society's values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the ways they are expressed are a society's culture. The way a society governs itself cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly affect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work.*

> *Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability. In order for public planning to be more effective, its methodology should include an integrated framework of cultural evaluation along similar lines to those being developed for social, environmental and economic impact assessment.* [136] *(Summary in Hawkes, 2001: vii)*

Community arts, based on the values and principles of inclusion and community development, and which promote positive community relations as an underlying principle, have the power to be such an expression of society, to empower individuals and communities and thus transform lives. It does this not by seeking one truth, one way, or one common understanding, but by seeking to

'problematise commonly and a-critically held assumptions and to challenge canonical understandings of the effects of human interactions with artworks.' [137] *(Belfiore 2007: 140).*

The Rural and the arts

"Community arts, by their very nature, support such platforms for creative and cultural engagement. Community arts have a long history here; however, the relationship between an area of policy-making and the arts, particularly community arts, has until relatively recently been an area 'closed' to policy

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[134] Ibid p457
[135] http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/community/Downloads/HawkesJon%282001%29TheFourthPillarOfSustainability.pdf
[136] Ibid pvii
[137] Belfiore 2007 op cit p 140

input and only available to be critiqued after the fact. The local particularities of politics, conflict and an emergent peace process opened more channels to offering knowledge and experience into a policy debate that had also seen a significant growth in consequent resources. Whilst that funding resource may now be on the wane, the determination to effect change through focused policy-affecting initiatives and arts-based interventions is becoming more the norm, with the arts employed to have a variety of critical inputs in discussions and useful outcomes for individuals and communities alike."

Conor Shields in "Between Ourselves" introduces the interface between policy, community and cultural engagement. In generalised policy arenas, the dimensions are usually quite well defined, but regarding rural Northern Ireland, there is some confusion in nomenclature, that define areas, populations and the relationship between metropolitan and rural and the mapping of information.

General Population Survey

The most recent ACNI General Population Survey claims that for the first time more people in rural areas than in urban areas are 'engaging in the arts' (2014: 3) (Engagement is a measure of combined attendance and participation '. [138]"

For example under PSA [Public Service Agreement] 9 one of the targets for DCAL is to increase the proportion of the Northern Ireland population that participates in arts events. Similarly under PSA 12, targets specifically aimed at DSD - but also at other departments - include the regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas, the creation of shared spaces and to promote community development." It would seem, according to these statistics in the recent ACNI General Population Survey (2014) reporting, that there has been improvement, where it is stated that rural areas engage with and participate in the arts more than urban areas. This was not a view generally shared by respondents within our research, which disputes this. Issues of quality and choice of provision, along with the

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[138] Ibid p3

definition of what constitutes 'engagement with the arts' needs to be further deconstructed in order to investigate the veracity of such qualifications.[139]

Young at Heart project participants get creative with artist-facilitator Louise Byrne.

The data refers to either attendance at one-off arts events or experiences or participation in an arts activity within an unspecified context, for an unspecified length of time,) However, the funding split between rural and urban areas, as highlighted in the *Examining Social inclusion in the arts* [140]report indicates the paucity of investment in the arts in rural areas.

> *Examining the […] ASOP-funded activities in terms of rural/urban split, the ACNI/DCAL analysis indicates that less than one in ten arts activities (7%) took place in a rural area, including 6% of exhibitions, 9% of participation activities and 3% of performance activities taking place in rural areas. This compares with an approximate population split of 64% (urban) to 35% (rural) for the population of Northern Ireland as a whole.*
> [141]*(Pateman, T. 2011. 'Rural and urban areas: Comparing lives using rural/urban classifications'. Regional Trends 43. Office for National Statistics: p19, quoted in Hull, 2014: 18)*

Hull suggests that a broader study of ACNI funding programmes from 2007 to 2012 indicates further disparity in funding between rural and urban areas, with 96% of grants awarded to urban areas as opposed to 4% for rural. The only area in which funding is more pronounced within rural areas, is within the DCAL Community Festivals Fund, where 'just over half (52%) of the community festivals in

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[139] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/news/general-population-survey-results-2014
[140] http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2013/culture_arts_leisure/12713.pdf
[141] Ibid p18

2010/11 took place in rural areas, with 48% taking place in urban areas.' [142] (Hull 2014:18, based on figures taken from 'Mapping of government funded arts venues, activities and festivals in Northern Ireland 2010/11' Bateson and Stevenson, 2011 DCAL and ACNI). Arts Council of Northern Ireland itself, in analysing over nine and half thousands awards since 1995, reflects a 24% allocation to rural areas, with rural/ urban classification based on Settlement Development Limits as defined by [the then] DoE. These further reflect scales of discrepancy between different statistical analyses. Based on a post-code analysis, the location of participation can be problematic. Furthermore, given there are awards to regional organisations based in metropolitan areas but carrying out programmes in rural settings, the effect on rural activity is hard to quantify.

These figures suggest, that in order for people in rural areas to attend and participate in arts events, they are of a kind which they have to pay unsubsidised prices for (which suggests they are commercially driven and 'high' arts), or they have to travel further distances, to reach urban hubs where funded events and projects are located, or they are attending and participating in local, voluntary led projects which are running without public funding, are provided for free, or in kind. Either way, it would seem that participation in the arts takes more effort (in terms of time/distance travelled and cost of travel), or is compromised on variety, quality and sustainability. The lack of funding available for rural areas certainly excludes them from the majority of community arts activities which are largely funding dependent, and offered at low cost or for free in order to facilitate access to harder to reach, isolated and excluded populations. The reasons for the severe disparity in funding need to be investigated further in order to redress the imbalance and lack of opportunity for participation in funded programmes.

Arts Council's Art Form and Specialist Area Policy for Community Arts 2013-2018

There is no rural arts strategy put forward by the Arts Council Northern Ireland in the same way as there is a Disability arts strategy, arts and older people strategy, youth arts strategy or community arts strategy, amongst others.

One of the funding objectives, however, under the *Art Form and Specialist Area Policy for Community Arts, 2013-2018* is to 'encourage applications from organisations outside Belfast or Derry and

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[142] Ibid p18

particularly in rural areas and those communities identified as being in need of regeneration' [143] (ACNI

2014a: 4)

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[143] http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/artform-documents/Dance_May14.pdf p4

The Art Form and Specialist Area policies 2013-2018 have been developed in line with *Ambitions for the Arts*, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts, 2013-18. The overarching priorities of the Plan are to champion the arts, promote access, and build a sustainable sector are reflected in the individual Art Form and Specialist Area policies.

Arts council 5-year strategy

There is a vague recognition within the Arts Council Northern Ireland 5-Year Strategy 2013-18 (ACNI 2014b) in relation to rural community needs and promoting access to the arts:

> *During the life of this plan we will encourage more people and communities to become engaged and more deeply involved in the arts. Tackling barriers to engagement in the arts and encouraging development and diversification of audiences are key ways in which the Arts Council will demonstrate its commitment to DCAL's expressed vision to target poverty and social exclusion.[144] (ACNI 2014b: 14).*

This is followed by the commitment to 'increase the proportion of arts activities delivered in rural areas' [145] (2014b: 14), partly by encouraging more touring companies to undertake audience development work. This is a strategy which seems to mirror some of the very successful rural touring work which has been undertaken in England, under the auspices of the Arts Council England [146] (ACE) (Arts Council England 2014: 14; Matarasso 2007: 451-452). Matarasso gives a breakdown of just how successful rural touring has been in England, Wales and Scotland in his article 'Common ground: cultural action as a route to community development' [147] (2007: 449-458). He details the history, funding investment, and structural support offered to such schemes, and how as a result 'tens of thousands of people have access to art events in community venues', whilst contributing to significant rural community development in the process [148](451-2).

However, the Arts Council Northern Ireland may seek to develop an even deeper commitment to rural areas, reflecting policy shifts at home and elsewhere.

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[144] (ACNI 2014b: 14).
[145] Ibid p14
[146] ACE - (Arts Council England 2014: 14
[147] http://www.academia.edu/1432538/Common_Ground_Cultural_action_as_a_route_to_community_development
[148] Ibid pps451-2

The ACE have made a verbal and financial commitment to the specific needs of rural areas since 2004 in their publication of *Arts in rural England* (ACE 2004) in which they pledged to

- respond to the particular needs of rural areas
- support artists working in rural areas
- improve access for rural audiences
- build partnerships for growth and
- campaign with rural organisations for recognition of their work.[149] (ACE 2014, 4)

Their percentage of funding for the arts in rural areas is also approximately commensurate with the percentage population living in rural areas in England [150] (2014: 5-8), and higher per head in many instances. This contrasts greatly with the level of funding made available through the ACNI to rural areas in Northern Ireland.

So, despite claims that everyone has access to a dedicated arts facility within twenty miles of where they live [151](ACNI 2014b: 7), and that the ACNI wants to ensure that 'everyone has access to excellent art, recognising that there are evident inequalities in the extent to which arts are available to all, especially amongst those who feel marginalised, isolated and voiceless...' [152] (2014b: 9) this is undermined by the quality and variety of what is on offer in rural areas, and the fact that the strategies and policies in place currently are predominantly urban-centric. This has the opposite effect than the intended, in that the 'voiceless' rural areas are written out of current ACNI strategies.

Whilst it is clear that there is a commitment on the part of the ACNI to use the arts in particular to 'deliver benefits to our communities' through the development of excellence, and 'dedicated interventions to enhance community engagement, out-reach programmes and collaborative projects that work beyond conventional arts spaces and activities that reach new audiences in fields such as disability, intercultural diversity, older people, marginalised children and youth' [153] (2014b:11), this needs to be explicitly related to the needs of people in rural communities in order for it to have an impact therein. If any of the goals of the three ACNI themes are to become relevant to rural areas, equally accessible to all (including the 40% of people who live in rural areas), if rural areas are to be vibrant and thrive, if inequalities between rural and urban are to be breached, then it is NOT sufficient to continue without a specific strategy for rural areas. Inequalities may currently be reinforced by the

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[149] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/ruralarts_phpCaiaDc.pdf p4
[150] Ibid p5-8
[151] ACNI 2014b: 7)
[152] ACNI 2014b: 9
[153] Ibid p11

arts council 5-year strategy, through using language and aims/themes/strategies which may inadvertently favour urban areas.

It is not *all* doom and gloom, however. Considering the networks and connections already existing between the ACNI and rural arts organisations, introducing a rural arts policy is not inconceivable, although increasing funding to develop rural arts may be more difficult. However, the recognition for the ACNI to work closely with local authorities as 'our long standing partners' in responding to local needs, and their target to support the 11 new Council Areas to develop dedicated Arts Strategies [154] (2014b: 16) poses some hope in terms of developing local rural community arts projects, and locally developing funding with local government, and in turn with their duty to include communities within their community planning processes.

Five Apples sculpture unveiled in Ballymena

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[154] Ibid p16

CHAPTER FIVE

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS - GROUPS

CHAPTER 5: Quantitative Findings - Groups

Introduction to quantitative results

The following segments present the predominantly quantitative findings of the questionnaires designed for the Exploring Change research project.

Each Segment (Segment 8 Groups, Segment 9 Artists and Segment 10 Participants) is organised into sections and subsections based on the indicators for the three different respondent groups for the questionnaire: organisations, artists and participants based on convenience sampling.

There were 32 questionnaires returned by organisations, 17 from artists and 33 from participants, making a total of 82 questionnaires.

Organisation Mission Statements – Key mission

Segment 8 – Table 1. Organisation Mission Statements (Key mission)

Mission statements - key mission	Number of Organisations	Percentage
Community Arts Activities	10	31%
Arts activities	10	31%
Arts activities for the purposes of social changes	4	12%
Health and well-being	9	28%
Community Development	5	15%
Social Isolation	1	3%
General - Education/Health/Training/Culture and community Development	5	15%
Cross-Community Work	4	12%
Age Related Work	4	12%
Culture	4	12%
Community Development	4	12%
Disability	3	9%

Explicitly stated within the mission statements of the organisations surveyed, the following themes were noted:

Thirty-one per cent of the respondent organisations used arts activities and community arts practices. From all the responding groups, 12 per cent stated that their use of arts activities were explicitly for the purposes of social change.

The second most mentioned category within the mission statements was that of health and well-being, 28 per cent, suggesting there is a strong interest between arts and health (although one organisation addressing health and well-being needs had never used community arts).

More surprisingly perhaps, of the 15 per cent of organisations with a specific brief for community development, some had never used the arts, as was the case with the one organisation whose main purpose was to reduce social isolation.

A number of the organisations, 15 per cent, had a more general purpose to cater for all sections of the community, although they did in nearly all cases mention specific themes, such as education, health and well-being, culture and community development.

Other significant mentions under 'mission statement' were cross-community work, age-related activities (either youth or older people), culture, education or training, 12% of responding organisations and disability, 9 per cent.

Additionally, some organisations catered for men - or women-only groups, ethnic minorities, socially isolated members of the community, or didn't answer.

By self-definition, then, the rural organisations surveyed cater for all sections of rural communities, and had also an additional specific focus to their work, for example, community development or health.

A third of the organisations had a specific arts focus, but a significant number had no arts experience, and a further 21 per cent of organisations had little experience (four projects or less).

This means that of the organisations who didn't have a specific artistic mission to their work, half had little or no arts experience, yet were interested in using the arts for their work, suggesting that there are many rural organisations interested in developing arts work, and who see the benefits of it, but haven't had the opportunity to do so.

Without exception, all organisations surveyed stated a desire to be involved in future arts projects.

Staffing of organisations

Segment 8 – Table 2. Types of organisations

Sector	Numbers	Percentage
Community and Voluntary sector	9	28%
Statutory Organisations (Local Councils)	4	12%
Care Facility	1	3%
Small Arts Organisations (1-2 staff)	11	34%
Medium sized Arts Organisations (2-10 staff)	6	18%
Large Arts Organisation (20 staff)	1	3%

Of the responding organisations, 28% could be categorised as working in the community/voluntary sector and 15% of the responding organisations could be considered as belonging to the statutory sector (4 council led and 1 large care facility).

The remainder were all, bar one, small community and arts organisations with no more than seven members of staff, 18 per cent, but mainly with 1-2 paid members of staff, 34%.

It wasn't specified whether these staff were part time or full time, and whether they were fixed-term, funding dependent, or self-employed.

One organisation, an arts centre, had 20 members of staff.

Of the organisations in the voluntary sector, 66 per cent were community organisations, and 33 per cent were arts organisations specifically.

The rural organisations surveyed for the purposes of this research indicate that rural arts work is dependent on voluntary and small organisations with few staff, suggesting limited funding and resources.

Staff

Type of Staff	No.	Percentage of
Paid	23	71%
Unpaid Volunteers	9	29%

Of the organisations responding to the Exploring Change survey, 71 per cent operated with paid members of staff and 29 per cent operated with unpaid volunteers.

Staffing levels of the organisations with paid staff

Number of staff	No.	Percentage
1-2 Paid staff	11	48%
4-7 Paid Staff	6	26%
20 Paid Staff	1	4%
150 + Paid Staff	5	22%

Almost fifty per cent of the responding organisations were small, with 1-2 paid staff members, and 26 per cent with less than 10 staff members.

Number of Volunteers used by Organisations

Number of Volunteers	Number of Organisations	Percentage
0	5	19%
1-4	6	19%
5-10	9	28%
10+	9	28%
No responses	2	6%

Most of the organisations relied heavily on volunteer help on a regular (weekly) basis to aid in the provision of their services: only five out of the thirty-two respondents did not use regular volunteer help, and two did not respond.

These figures do not take into account the volunteer activity for one-off events and festivals, nor do they take into account internships and work experience, and therefore the actual figure is likely to be higher.

However, regular volunteer activity would seem to suggest a high reliance on an unpaid workforce, even outside of the voluntary sector.

Volunteering

Community organisations in rural areas are much more likely to be run by voluntary workers and, unless they are statutory and/or large organisations, tend to employ very few permanent members of staff.

As in urban areas, community and arts organisations lean heavily on part time, contract based and funding dependent members of staff (often community development officers). However, this is likely to be even more pronounced in rural locations.

This puts rural organisations at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

It is important to say that voluntary work is seen as an incredibly valued way of engaging with communities in urban areas, particularly within community development projects[155] and volunteers, when sufficiently supported, act as a bridge towards communities[156] who may never otherwise engage with community development and the arts.

> *Experience has shown that the most effective and sustainable community development programmes are those which involve local people at all stages. The times of 'parachuting people' into communities, especially paid staff to do things to a community rather than support them to do things for themselves has shown to be an ineffective model.[157]*

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[155] Volunteer Now (2011) *The Role of Volunteering as an integral part of Community Development in NI,* Belfast, Volunteer Now

[156] Volunteer Now (2011) *The Role of Volunteering as an integral part of Community Development in NI,* Belfast, Volunteer Now p7

[157] Volunteer Now (2011) *The Role of Volunteering as an integral part of Community Development in NI,* Belfast p6

This is not to say that volunteers should replace paid workers within community development, but that they should work together within clear, supporting frameworks.[158]

Geoghegan and Powell warn that in Ireland although volunteer levels are high, there are questions regarding the quality of engagement with local people.[159] The complexity of volunteering activity demands a strong infrastructure to maximise capacity and maintain high standards. [160] Good practice and clear management policies are essential [161] as are training, support and opportunities for recognition in terms of skills learned.[162]

This was supported by evidence from visiting and speaking to community group leaders for the Exploring Change project.

It became clear that many (particular voluntary led) organisations felt they lacked expertise in writing funding applications, are isolated from networks, and often aren't aware of what is taking place in neighbouring villages, hamlets and towns.

'Growing the capacity of local people, agencies and professionals that support communities and build social networks founded on high levels of volunteering and skilled support is one of the prerequisites for vibrant rural communities' [163]

The implications, supported by the research carried out for the Exploring Change project, are that the predominance of volunteering in community development in rural areas (double that of the rest of the voluntary and community sectors, Volunteer Now 2011: 6) needs to be considered, supported and developed when carrying out community arts work with rural community organisations.

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[158] Volunteer Now (2011) *The Role of Volunteering as an integral part of Community Development in NI,* Belfast p6

[159] Geoghegan, M and Powell, F (2011) 'Community Development, Partnership Governance and Dilemmas of Professionalization: Profiling and Assessing the case of Ireland' in *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, pp.845-861

[160] Volunteer Now (2011) *The Role of Volunteering as an integral part of Community Development in NI,* Belfast
[161] Ibid p9
[162] Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (2013) *Formal Voluntary Action in Rural Northern Ireland: What does this tell us about the existing and potential impact of volunteering on community well being and capacity?* Belfast, DARD

[163] Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (2013) *Formal Voluntary Action in Rural Northern Ireland: What does this tell us about the existing and potential impact of volunteering on community well being and capacity?* Belfast, DARD

Demographic of those accessing Rural Community Organisations

Segment 8 – Table 6. Demographic of those accessing Rural Community Organisations

Community catered for	Number	Percentage
All sectors	20	60%
Age related	8	24%
Men only/Women only	3	9%
Training	5	15%
Marginalised groups	3	9%
Specifically Cross Community	1	3%
Drop in users	8	24%
Members	4	12%
Sports	6	18%

The findings from this research show that rural organisations cater for all sectors of the community, and range from having a general remit of catering for all community groups and all sections of the surrounding populations, over 60 per cent, although some organisations catered to very specific sections of the community (age related groups, ranging from parent and toddler through youth groups to older people) 24 per cent. Some organisations catered for men or women only groups, 9 per cent and some were primarily for education and training groups, 15 per cent.

Marginalised groups (disability related, low income families, single parents) were catered for by 9 per cent of the organisations, and cross-community only groups were catered for by 3 per cent.

Twenty-four per cent of organisations catered for drop-in users, and 12 per cent for subscribed members groups.

Some organisations specified they catered for arts or sports related activities, 18 per cent.

It is clear that community centres and community organisations within rural areas need to be flexible and highly responsive to a wide range of needs, and are less likely to be purpose-defined as centres in urban areas. In addition, conversations with community group leaders suggested that community buildings are used for everything from weddings and funeral gatherings to youth clubs and weightwatchers meetings.

Age range catered for by organisations/groups

Age range catered for by organisations/groups

Age range	No.	Percentage
Any age	17	52%
Any age adult	25	77%
Any age children	18	55%
Pre-school (0-4)	18	55%
Primary (5-11)	23	71%
Age 12-15	24	74%
Age 16-25	27	84%
Age 26-50	27	84%
Age 50-65	30	94%
Age 65+	30	94%

Segment 8 – Figure 1. Age range catered for
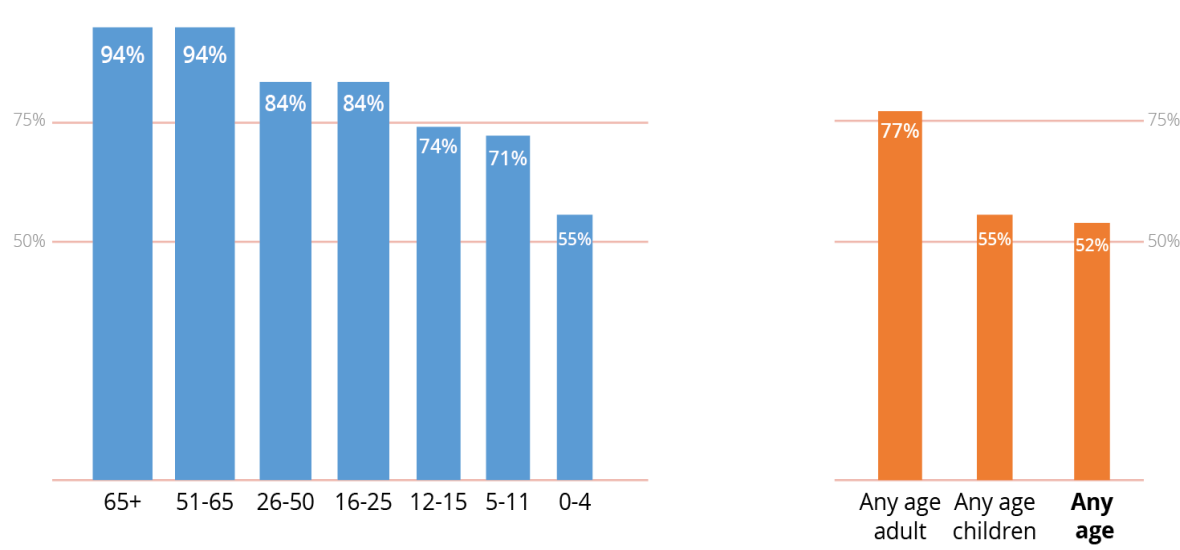
With regards age range catered for, most organisations and the premises they work in, catered for all sections in the community, however, there are marginal differences particularly when young children are involved.

Ninety-four per cent of responses showed organisations working with people 65 and over, only 55 per cent of responses showed organisations working with pre-school children.

Ninety-four per cent of organisations catered for adults 50 years old and above, 73 per cent worked with children 5 years old through to 11 years old.

Community background

Community relations in rural Northern Ireland can be complex and more difficult to define or recognise.

The results of the Exploring Change research project reflect this.

Organisations didn't want to or couldn't specify the community affiliation of their members.

For many organisations, their constitution states that they are cross-community, and therefore there was a reluctance to indicate whether the area they are located in is demographically of one population of another.

However, those organisations that specified a particular community demographic were located predominantly within Nationalist areas, 42 per cent.

There were no organisations specifying an exclusively Unionist demographic, and 45 per cent offered either a 50/50 or near 50/50 split classification, or ticked 'other' as a classification of community affiliation, not wanting to specify either way.

Although only three categories were given (nationalist, unionist or other), the range of answers (such as 45/45/10 split, or ticking all boxes) demonstrates that many rural community groups find a classification split according to a unionist/nationalist demographic problematic.

The data indicates the need for ways of classifying rural communities differently, using classifications which offer a much wider and more complex reading of community background, and which don't force a form of local 'political correctness' on to the organisations, but allow for positive self-identity.

This is perhaps an illustration of 'denial' or 'invisible conflict' within rural which wouldn't exist in urban areas.

There were other signs that community background permeates rural life on a practical level, but not along the clear, visible, violently conflicting ways that are more apparent in urban areas.

Targeting activities towards socially excluded groups

Sixty three per cent of groups targeted their activities in the highest proportion to older people and 54 per cent towards disabled groups. Activities were also targeted often towards ethnic minorities, 30 per cent.

'Other' socially excluded groups specified, 18 per cent, included farmers, people with mental ill-health, young people at risk, and young teenagers.

Eighteen per cent of the organisations did not target their activities specifically to socially excluded groups.

It can be concluded then, in the group of organisations surveyed, that there is a high percentage of activity which has a social agenda, inferring that social change of a specific nature is a goal of most organisations operating in rural areas.

This indicates a broader range and response in catering for cross-community work, inter-generational work, or inter-cultural projects than shown by the demographic data above for the main groups identified as accessing the services.

It also gives a clearer indication that although many groups identify themselves as being cross-community by nature of their constitution, there is a great need for cross-community work.

It may well be the case, that community groups identify as 'cross-community' as their policies and ethos reflect this, without having the means to acknowledge 'invisible conflict', the 'denial of conflict' or the need for a focus on positively and actively promoting cross-community relations.

Overt violence may not be the norm in rural communities, but there is perhaps a need to distinguish between identifying as a cross-community organisation with an open access policy, and the recognition that cross-community work is a real issue for rural populations.

Rural issues addressed by organisations

Segment 8 – Table 8. Key Issues

Key issues addressed	Directly	Indirectly	Not at all
Social Isolation	24/73%	8/25%	1/3%
Community Relations	19/61%	11/35%	1/3%
Access to services	22/68%	7/23%	2/6%

The top three issues addressed by organisations in rural areas as surveyed in the Exploring Change research are social isolation, community relations and access to services, to an almost identical extent.

Within these top three, however, it is interesting to note that social isolation and access to services are addressed *directly* to a high degree, whereas community relations is targeted *indirectly* to a higher degree than the others are targeted indirectly.

This would seem to reinforce the observation above that addressing community relations in rural areas is problematic.

Rural issues addressed by organisations

Issue	Directly	Indirectly	Not at all
Social Isolation	24/73%	8/25%	1/3%
Access to services	22/68%	7/23%	2/6%
Sectarianism	8/25%	13/42%	2/6%
Community relations	19/61%	11/35%	1/3%
Youth Unemployment	7/23%	10/32%	7/23%
Unemployment in general	6/19%	13/42%	5/16%
Poverty	13/42%	10/32%	2/6%
Racism	11/35%	7/23%	6/19%
Lack of opportunities in education and training	12/39%	11/35%	2/6%
Lack of opportunities in re-training	7/23%	10/32%	4/13%
Lack of opportunities in general	11/35%	8/26%	2/6%
Other	4/13%	1/3%	1/3%
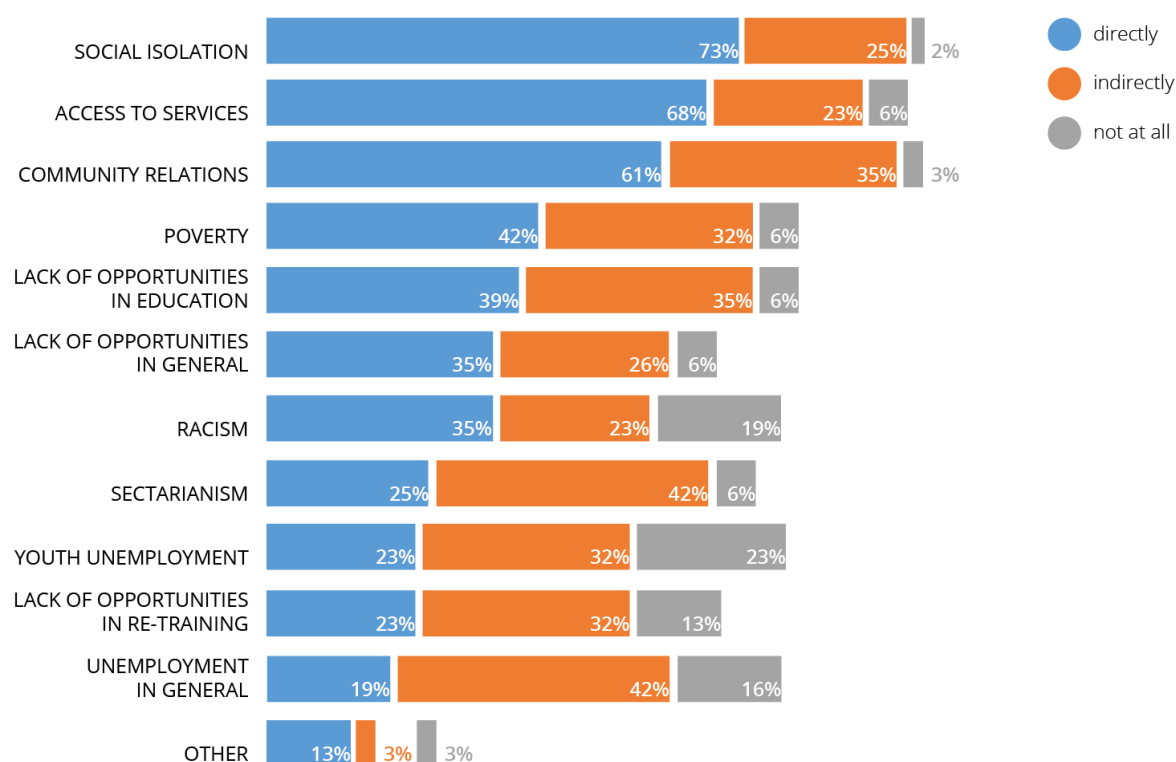
With regards key issues targeted in general, unemployment (both in general, and to a slightly lesser extent youth unemployment) sectarianism and lack of opportunities in re-training are addressed more often than not indirectly rather than directly, whereas poverty, racism and lack of opportunities in education and in general, are more likely to be tackled directly.

This possibly says something about the stigma and sensitivity surrounding the issues, and the need for a soft-targeting of these as a result.

Community groups and experience of the arts

Segment 8 – Table 9. Community groups and experience of the arts

Number of projects	Number of Groups	Percentage
0	4	13%
Less than 5	7	22%
5+ projects	20	63%
No response	1	2%

Segment 8 – Figure 3. Community groups and experience of the arts
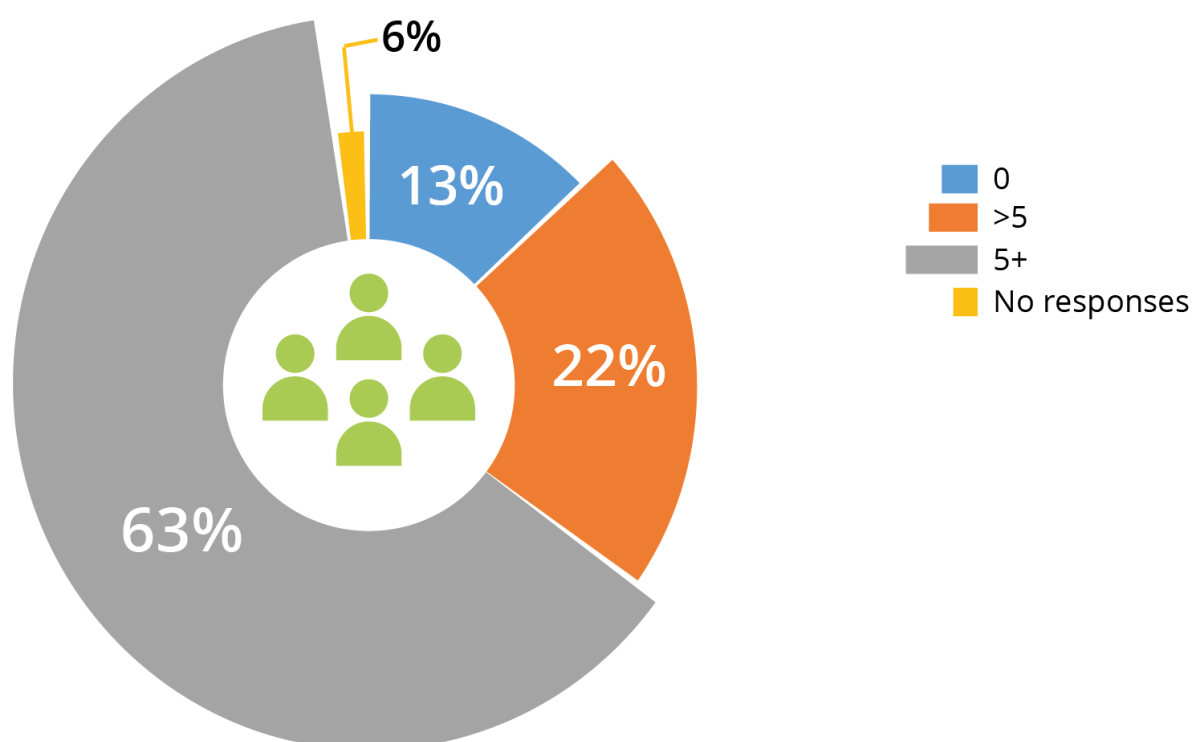
The majority of organisations surveyed had recent experience in community arts activities, with 63% having run community arts projects at least once a year for the past five years, and 35 per cent of organisations having little or no previous experience.

However, via Community Arts Partnership's Annual Consultation Surveys (14/15, 15/16) we see that the general picture is somewhat different with 70% having no prior experience of community arts practice.

The fact that many of the organisations which responded to the surveys are familiar with the work of CAP, and have been supported through CAP's community engagement programme (this is how some of them were recruited to the research), means that the baseline data may reflect an experience in community arts.

Frequency of Community Arts Activities

Segment 8 – Table 10. Frequency of Community Arts Activities

Frequency	Number of organisations	Percentage
Once a week	7	22%
More than once a week	4	12%
1-3 times a month	6	20%
5-10 times a year	7	22%
Less than 4 times a year	0	0%
One off events	4	12%
No response	4	12%

Segment 8 – Figure 4. Frequency of Community Arts Activities
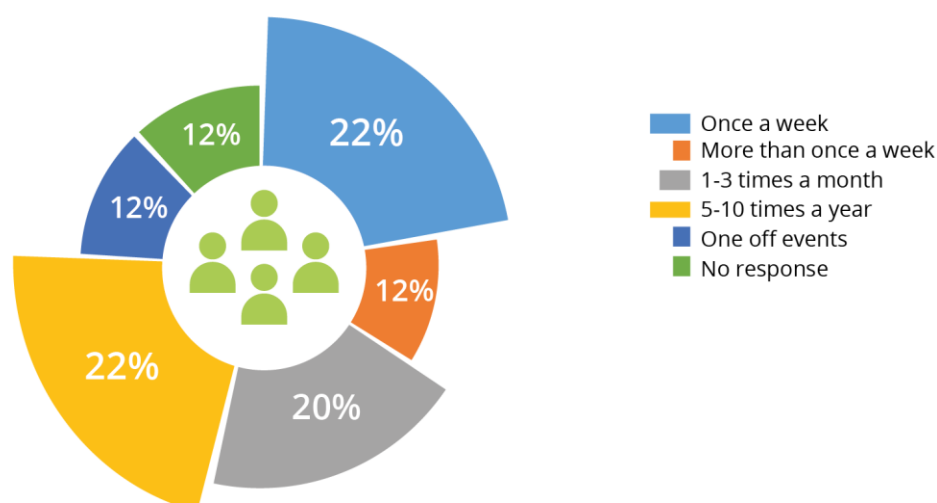
When compared against the frequency of community arts activities, the data indicates a consistent and frequent level of experience across organisations, with 34 per cent of organisations indicating activities happening at least once a week.

A further 34 per cent include community arts activities less than once a month or for one off events. 20 per cent of the organisations organise community arts activities at least once a month, and three didn't answer.

This demonstrates a strong desire amongst the surveyed organisations to employ arts activities, and suggests that there is a strong need, and recognition of the benefits that community arts can bring to their members.

Type of arts activities

The organisations demonstrated an engagement with a wide-range of self-specified art forms, with the top four being: dance (20 out of 32), craft (18 out of 32), traditional arts (18 out of 32) and photography (18 out of 32).

Over half the organisations also engaged in drama and theatre, music and film-making or animation respectively. The least popular art forms were fashion, drawing and painting, and circus skills, maybe because they are either more unusual, or more solitary activities.

Other activities specified by organisations included: drumming; storytelling; pub theatre; building carnival floats, cross border and primary age craft schemes; Graffiti art; Song writing, boat building, willow sculpture, bog wood workshops, cultural crafts, illustration, glass workshops, blacksmithing, environmental arts, and basketry. This indicates the wide range of activities organisations in rural areas engage in, and not only more technologically based digital media activities, such as photography and animation, but community arts activities that reflect and draw on rural life, as indicated by traditional arts and 'other' activities, such as bog wood workshops, boat building, blacksmithing and environmental arts.

Location of activities, and facilities available.

Activities do not tend to take place in a purpose built facilities (only 7 out of 32 organisations said they accessed purpose built facilities for their community arts activities), but are much more likely to take place either on the organisation's premises (18 out of 32), or in a community building (19 out of 32) (which may be one and the same). Many organisations also specified that their activities happen outdoors (12 out of 32), or in no fixed space (8 out of 32).

Four out of 32 organisations indicated that a lack of facilities is a major obstacle to providing activities, and 8 out of 32 organisations find it a hindrance.

Three out of 32 organisations also stated that access to purpose built facilities would be a major need in providing high quality arts activities, and 10 out of 32 stated it would be desirable for high quality provision in the future.

A far higher percentage felt they would need better access to high quality arts equipment in order to provide high quality projects (24 out of 32 organisations).

It is clear from this data that many organisations do not feel that they have access to either high quality arts equipment or the purpose built facilities that they need for community arts activities.

Given that the Arts Council Northern Ireland data states that there are arts venues within a 20 mile radius of 99% of households in Northern Ireland (ACNI 2014b: 7), our received responses would suggest that organisations still feel unable to access said facilities and arts equipment for their members or participants.

It would also suggest that despite the flexibility of community buildings in rural areas, they are not ideal venues for arts activities given that they may lack specialist equipment or facilities, and therefore participants are not able to gain the whole benefit of participation in arts based programmes.

Reasons why organisations use community arts

Reasons	Frequently	Occasionally	Never Considered	Would never
Working towards a particular event	10/32%	11/35%	1/3%	
To access particular funding	7/23%	10/32%	3/10%	1/3%
In response to user requests	15/48%	9/29%	1/3%	
To take advantage of skills offered by staff	8/26%	11/35%	2/6%	
To tie in with the mission statement of the organisation	16/52%	4/13%	2/6%	
To address a particular issue	16/52%	10/32%	10/32%	
To counter sectarianism	9/29%	5/16%	5/16%	1/3%
To build community relationships	18/58%	8/26%		
To develop skills of participants	17/55%	6/19%		
As an educational or training	16/52%	7/23%	1/3%	
To develop or extend existing opportunities	14/45%	7/23%	1/3%	
To raise awareness of issues	8/26%	7/23%	3/10%	
To increase access to services for particular groups	12/39%	7/23%	3/10%	
As an aid to developing services	10/32%	10/32%	1/3%	
As an aid to Long Term sustainable community development	15/48%	6/19%	2/6%	
Other	4/13%			

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FREQUENTLY

Reason	%
To build community relationships	58%
To develop skills of participants	55%
To address a particular issue	52%
As an educational or training	52%
To tie in with the mission statement of the organisation	52%
In response to user requests	48%
As an aid to LT sustainable community development	48%
To develop or extend existing opportunities	45%
To increase access to services for particular groups	39%
Working towards a particular event	32%
As an aid to developing services	32%
To counter sectarianism	29%
To take advantage of skills offered by staff	26%
To raise awareness of issues	26%
To access particular funding	23%
Other	13%

OCCASIONALLY

Reason	%
Working towards a particular event	35%
To take advantage of skills offered by staff	35%
As an aid to developing services	32%
To access particular funding	32%
To address a particular issue	32%
In response to user requests	29%
To build community relationships	26%
As an educational or training	23%
To develop or extend existing opportunities	23%
To increase access to services for particular groups	23%
To raise awareness of issues	23%
To develop skills of participants	19%
As an aid to LT sustainable community development	19%
To counter sectarianism	16%
To tie in with the mission statement of the organisation	13%

Via the research questionnaire, the most frequently given reasons for organisations using community arts are to build community relations, to develop skills of participants, as an educational or training tool, to address a particular issue, or to tie in with the mission statement of the organisations.

It would seem that whereas community relations are seen as sensitive, and difficult for organisations to tackle directly, community arts are used frequently to address sensitive issues and appear as the top reason given for addressing community relations.

This would suggest that the arts are uniquely placed to offer a way to effectively address sensitive issues. However, whereas many organisations seek to promote community relations through the arts, sectarianism is seen as a separate issue, which some organisations had never considered using the arts to approach, and some would never consider using them for this purpose.

Less frequently community arts are used to raise awareness, or to increase access to services, and very few organisations stated that they would never use the arts to access particular funding, or to counter sectarianism.

Funding of activities

A high percentage of organisations, 72 per cent, funded their activities through grants, although only 21 per cent of these organisations were purely grant funded. 50 per cent of respondents also funded activities through their own funds, and 9 per cent were purely self-funding.

Facilitation of arts activities

In 18 per cent of organisations, no outside artists or partner organisations were brought in to run community arts activities, and were reliant on internal staff and volunteers only.

This is perhaps less surprising than it first seems, given that many of the organisations surveyed were arts organisations, and would therefore presumably use their own staff for community arts activities.

However, it does say something about the willingness (or lack of it) to engage in collaborative work, which is essential in developing community capacity, thus suggesting that community development isn't as effective in these cases, or possibly isn't seen as much of a priority.

In 50 per cent of cases where volunteers were involved in the running of activities there were no staff members involved. This correlates to the number of volunteer organisations responding to the questionnaire, just under 30 per cent.

6 per cent of organisations never engaged staff members or volunteers in their arts activities, which were always run by outside artists and partner organisations.

Artistic Outcomes produced

Segment 8 – Table 12. Artistic outcomes

Outcomes	Numbers	Percentages
Exhibition	21	65%
Music CD	8	26%
Film	12	39%
Artwork for community	17	55%
Performance	12	39%
Other	5	16%

Segment 8 – Figure 6. Artistic outcomes
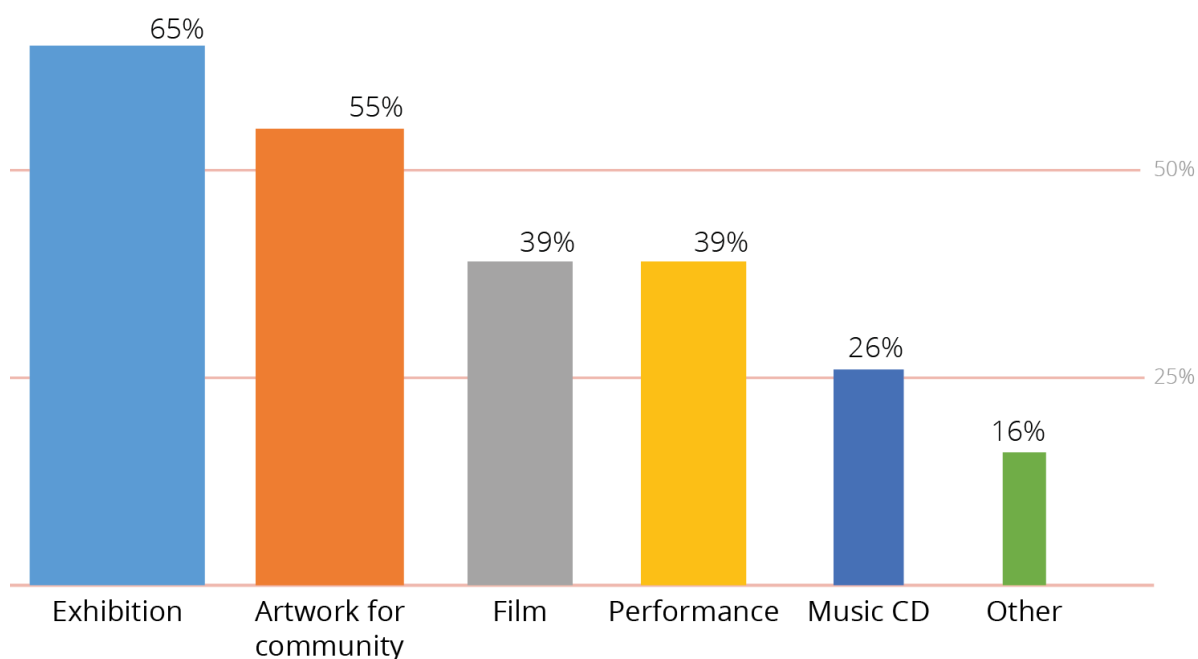
Community Arts traditionally has delivered a range of artistic outcomes, primarily performance, publication or exhibition, which is in line with the rest of the Arts sector.

Community Arts activities were most likely to result in the production of an exhibition or artwork for the community, followed by a film or performance. Each of these involves the public display of material, indicating that the involvement of an audience or the wider public in tangible outcomes of community arts activity is of importance and mutual benefit to both the participants and their wider communities.

Benefits of Community Arts

Benefits	Very much agree	Agree somewhat	Don't agree
Participants are more confident as a result	23/74%	5/16%	
CA bring diverse communities together	19/61%	8/26%	
CA help improve community relations	23/74%	5/16%	
Participants learn new skills	27/84%	2/6%	
They help break down barriers between people	28/87%		
They encourage collaborative ways of working	23/74%	5/16%	
They are fun	26/81%	2/6%	
They increase what's on offer by our organisation	26/81%	2/6%	
They are easily accessible to everyone	18/58%	6/19%	2/6%
CA help people get jobs	9/29%	16/52%	1/3%
CA promote physical and mental well-being	23/74%	4/13%	
Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included	24/77%	2/6%	1/3%
CA contribute to people's education and training	21/68%	5/16%	
CA is sensitive to individual needs	14/45%	11/35%	
CA work for all ages	24/77%	3/10%	
CA help extend the impact our organisation has on the surrounding communities	23/74%	4/13%	

Figure 7. Benefits of Community Arts

- They help break down barriers between people — very much agree 87%
- Participants learn new skills — very much agree 84%, agree somewhat 6%
- They are fun — very much agree 81%, agree somewhat 6%
- They increase what's on offer by our organisation — very much agree 81%, agree somewhat 6%
- CA work for all ages — very much agree 77%, agree somewhat 10%
- People are socially included — very much agree 77%, agree somewhat 6%, don't agree 3%
- Participants are more confident as a result — very much agree 74%, agree somewhat 16%
- CA help improve community relations — very much agree 74%, agree somewhat 16%
- They encourage collaborative ways of working — very much agree 74%, agree somewhat 16%
- CA promote physical and mental well-being — very much agree 74%, agree somewhat 13%
- CA help extend the impact our organisation has on the surrounding communities — very much agree 74%, agree somewhat 13%
- CA contribute to people's education and training — very much agree 68%, agree somewhat 16%
- CA bring diverse communities together — very much agree 61%, agree somewhat 26%
- They are easily accessible to everyone — very much agree 58%, agree somewhat 19%, don't agree 6%
- CA is sensitive to individual needs — very much agree 45%, agree somewhat 35%
- CA help people get jobs — very much agree 29%, agree somewhat 52%, don't agree 3%

Legend: very much agree (blue), agree somewhat (orange), don't agree (grey)

From the research group we can see that main benefits which organisations felt resulted from using community arts, were that they help break down barriers, closely followed by participants learning new skills; that they are fun, and they increase what's on offer by the organisation.

Respondents felt that the arts helped people to get jobs, they were easily accessible, and catered for individual needs to a certain extent, but didn't tend to strongly agree with these statements.

What is interesting to note is that there is a perception that new skills are learned, but that skills are not linked to new job prospects. This suggests a number of things: that it is perceived that people engage in the arts for lifelong learning purposes, but not in order to directly increase job prospects; that the arts help develop transferrable, or soft skills which are not directly linked to specific job openings; and/or that the arts are not currently used by organisations to directly help people enter the labour market, reskill them, or help them get out of unemployment. However, there has been Social Return on Investment data from over a decade ago that suggested that Intermediate Labour Market activities, wedded to creative endeavour, could provide positive results if funded sustainably allowing development impact to be supported and charted longitudinally.

However, one of the main reasons cited for using the arts was as an educational or training tool, which would suggest that the kind of education or training for which the arts are employed is not linked to finding a job.

This would, however, need further investigation to verify, but also suggests that there is more scope for the arts to be more explicitly used to help people gain skills and training they need in order to further their career/employment prospects.

Interestingly, this disconnect between building soft skills, but not receiving formal accreditation or qualifications to support progress into employment is reflected in both the experiences of volunteers in rural Northern Ireland (see DARD 2013:22) and in the informal interviews held with rural community groups as part of this research. DETI, DE and DEL all ceased funding so-called soft skills from c. 2008. The closure of the Workers Educational Association in 2014, owed much to this shift in targeted provision.

The informal interviews suggested that urban artists with recognised qualifications are preferred or given preference in delivering community arts workshops over local, experienced artists who don't hold college or university certificates, but who are much more likely to be better acquainted with the communities they work within.

This more general attitude relating to the tensions between the formal and informal, soft/hard/unaccredited and fully independently accredited has been one often heard at community and indeed arts sectoral levels.

This would suggest a range of potentials: that there is a wider overall need within rural communities to either offer formal qualifications for skills gained 'in the field' (e.g. in linking community arts activities to skill-building; in volunteering), or in working towards a change in employment culture to recognise experience and self-taught skills on an equivalent and individual basis.

Segment 8 – Table 14. Difficulties experienced by organisations

Difficulties identified	Very difficult	Some difficulty	No difficulty	Not sure
Lack of interest/uptake		20/61%	7/23%	1/3%
Lack of adequate resources	11/35%	12/39%	3/10%	

Difficulties in participants getting to activities	5/16%	17/52%	5/16%	1/3%
Lack of expertise/knowledge in the arts	3/10%	2/6%	10/32%	1/3%
Not having the right people to run activities	1/3%	12/39%	14/45%	
Difficulty in getting artists to visit rural areas	6/19%	11/35%	9/29%	4/13%
Artists don´t have adequate knowledge of rural issues	3/10%	10/32%	9/29%	4/13%
Lack of funding	14/45%	13/42%	2/6%	
Lack of adequate space	5/16%	7/23%	14/45%	
Certain communities never access activities	5/16%	17/52%	4/13%	2/6%
Difficulties in publicising activities	3/10%	13/42%	11/35%	
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects	4/13%	15/48%	4/13%	1/3%
Artists don´t understand community development issues	1/3%	10/32%	12/39%	2/6%
Target participants don´t understand community development issues	1/3%	14/45%	8/26%	2/6%
Communication between organisations, artists and participants	1/3%	9/29%	17/52%	
A difference between what they organisation wants to achieve and what the participants want to achieve	3/10%	9/29%	9/29%	2/6%
Other	1/3%	1/3%		

Difficulties experienced by organisations in using Community Arts

VERY DIFFICULT

Lack of funding	45%
Lack of adequate resources	35%
Difficulty in getting artists to visit rural areas	19%
Difficulties in participants getting to activities	16%
Certain communities never access activities	16%
Lack of adequate space	16%
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects	13%
Difficulties in publicising activities	10%
Artists don´t have adequate knowledge of rural issues	10%
A difference between what they organisation wants to achieve and what the participants want to achieve	10%
Lack of expertise/knowledge in the arts	10%
Target participants don´t understand community development issues	3%
Not having the right people to run activities	3%
Artists don´t understand community development issues	3%
Communication between organisations, artists and participants	3%
Other	3%

SOME DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Percentage
Lack of interest/uptake	61%
Difficulties in participants getting to activities	
Certain communities never access activities	
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects	48%
Target participants don´t understand community development issues	45%
Difficulties in publicising activities	42%
Lack of funding	42%
Not having the right people to run activities	39%
Lack of adequate resources	39%
Difficulty in getting artists to visit rural areas	35%
Artists don´t have adequate knowledge of rural issues	32%
Artists don´t understand community development issues	32%
A difference between what they organisation wants to achieve and what the participants want to achieve	29%
Communication between organisations, artists and participants	29%
Lack of adequate space	23%
Lack of expertise/knowledge in the arts	6%
Other	3%

NO DIFFICULTY

Category	%
Communication between organisations, artists and participants	52%
Lack of adequate space	45%
Not having the right people to run activities	45%
Artists don´t understand community development issues	39%
Difficulties in publicising activities	35%
Lack of expertise/knowledge in the arts	32%
A difference between what they organisation wants to achieve and what the participants want to achieve	29%
Artists don´t have adequate knowledge of rural issues	29%
Difficulty in getting artists to visit rural areas	29%
Target participants don´t understand community development issues	26%
Lack of interest/uptake	23%
Difficulties in participants getting to activities	16%
Certain communities never access activities	13%
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects	13%
Lack of adequate resources	10%
Lack of funding	6%

It is of no surprise that the main obstacle to using community arts perceived nearly unanimously by organisations is lack of funding (27 out of 32 organisations stated that funding was a problem to a greater or lesser extent, with 2 out of 32 unsure, and 2 out of 32 not responding to this statement).

This might suggest that the arts funding climate is a reflection of the current financial climate. It may also be a particularly sharply experienced in areas or organisations with low capacity or outside priority areas of support of funding interventions like Neighbourhood Renewal or TRPSI.

Lack of funding, investment, and lack of access to purpose built facilities, may also responsible for the second greatest perceived difficulty (to a greater or lesser extent) in using community arts: lack of resources. This is closely followed by difficulties in physically getting to activities; some communities not accessing activities; and a lack of uptake in longer term activities.

However, lack of interest, lack of space, and communication between organising parties were not seen as major difficulties. This suggests that lack of uptake and some communities not accessing activities is not down to lack of interest, but may be for other reasons (such as transport, timing of activities, community relations, etc).

In order for marginalised community groups to access community arts in greater numbers, these issues would need to be investigated further in order to increase accessibility.

Consultation with participants

Eighty seven per cent of the research group of organisations commented on the extent to which they consult with participants as a means to gather feedback regarding community arts activities.

Of those organisations making comment, 11% said they didn't consult with participants regarding their experience of community arts. Of the remaining organisations, a significant percentage (48% of organisations who gathered feedback) did so either after every workshop or on a weekly basis.

This indicates a high percentage of participants who are regularly and actively engaged in one way or another in shaping the arts activities they are involved in. On the other end of the spectrum, 24% of organisations only involved participants in feedback processes either once per project or once a year, and 28% gathered feedback more than once per project, monthly or up to every two months.

Those organisations who gathered participant feedback most frequently tended to be (but weren't restricted to) small organisations (with up to seven paid workers), with the least feedback tending to be gathered from district councils and voluntary organisations. This might suggest that the small organisations with some paid workers are closely sufficiently involved with participants, have time set aside for feedback, and have feedback processes integral to projects in place due to funding obligations.

Those who do not have such involved feedback processes may not be as directly involved with participants (such as district councils), or may not have such obligations placed on them through grant funding (such as self-funding volunteer organisations, or those with or less restrictive small grant feedback processes)

They may also have informal feedback processes which wouldn't necessarily be acknowledged as 'feedback' (such as informal conversations, closer inter-personal understanding of the community context, participants who are also volunteer leaders of projects etc), or it may be that third party organisations who run arts projects conduct the participant feedback for them, as will be the case in up to 65% of those researched.

Further investigation would be needed to determine the level of participant feedback and therefore involvement in the running of community arts activities specific to volunteer-facilitated organisations.

CHAPTER SIX

QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION
- ARTISTS

CHAPTER 6: Quantitative Information - Artists

Section 1

Question 1 Representation

In terms of representation our artist respondents were spread geographically across 4 counties – 42 per cent from Tyrone, 24 per cent from Antrim, 18 per cent from Fermanagh and a small number from County Down.

Question 2 - Art Forms

There was a wide range of art forms represented and much in the way of multi-disciplinary practice exhibited with most respondents listing at least two disciplines which they facilitated regularly.

The art forms represented were visual arts, textiles, creative writing, photography, video, sculpture, music, festival and carnival art, pottery, drama and dance.

Section 2

Question 1 – Experience

Segment 9 – Table 1. Artists experience of community arts practice

Level of Experience	Number of Artists	Percentage
0 experience	3	17%
Less than 5	5	30%
5 + projects	9	53%

Segment 9 – Figure 1. Artists experience of community arts practice
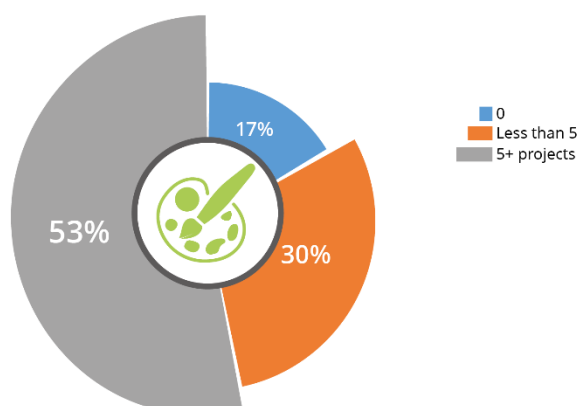
Of the artists who responded to our questionnaires, just over 50 per cent had high levels of experience, delivering 5 or more community arts projects in rural areas in the last 5 years, just on 30 per cent had some experience conducting less than 5 projects in the last 5 years and a small number, just over 17 per cent, had no experience in project delivery.

Question 2 – Time Frame

Segment 9 – Table 2. Frequency of artists' community arts activities

Frequency	Number of Artists	Percentage
Once a week	1	6%
More than once a week	3	17%
1-3 times a month	0	0
5-10 times a year	5	30%
Less than 4 times a year	3	17%
One off events	3	17%
No experience	3	17%

Segment 9 – Figure 2. Frequency of artists' community arts activities
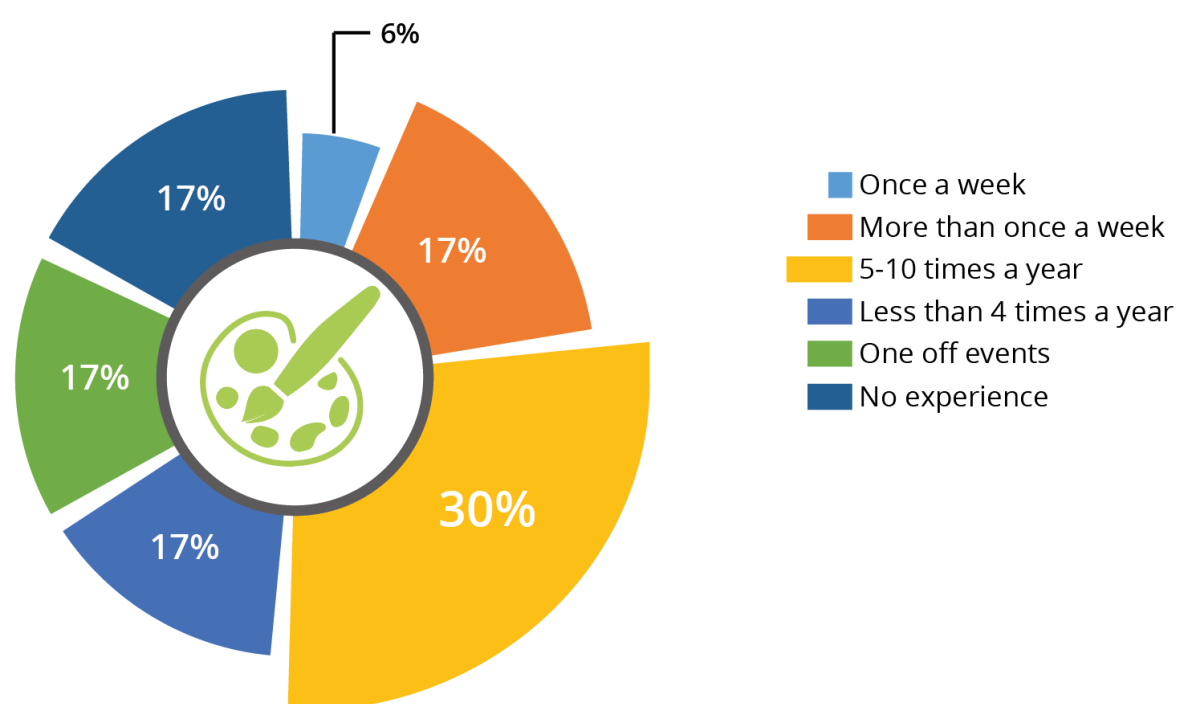
Of those with experience of community arts project delivery, in terms of the time frames of the projects, this varied markedly.

Seventeen per cent of all respondents delivered projects more than once per week, 1 of our respondents delivered projects at least once per week, 30 per cent delivered projects between 5 and 10 times per year and 17 per cent delivered projects less than 4 times per year or for one off events

Question 3 - Why were community arts activities being used and how often

Segment 9 – Table 3. Why were community arts activities being used and how often

Reasons	Frequently		Occasionally		Never considered		Would never	
Working towards a specific event	9	50%	6	36%	1	7%		
To tie in with the mission statement	1	7%	9	50%	4	21%		
To address a particular issue	7	43%	4	21%	2	14%		
To counter sectarianism	4	21%	2	14%	4	21%	1	7%
To build community relations	9	50%	4	21%	4	21%		
To develop skills of participants	7	43%	4	21%	4	21%		
As an educational or training tool	4	21%	10	57%	1	7%		
To develop or and extend existing opportunities	9	50%	2	14%	4	21%		
To raise awareness of issues as an aid to advocacy	2	14%	6	36%	4	21%		
To increase access to services for particular groups	2	14%	6	36%	4	21%		
As an aid to developing services	1	7%	7	43%	4	21%		
As an aid to long-term and sustainable community development	6	36%	4	21%	2	14%		
Other	4	21%	1	7%				

Why were community arts activities being used and how often

FREQUENTLY

Category	Percentage
Working towards a specific event	50%
To build community relations	50%
To develop or/and extend existing opportunities	50%
To develop skills of participants	43%
To address a particular issue	43%
As an aid to LT and sustainable community development	36%
As an educational or training tool	21%
To counter sectarianism	21%
Other	21%
To raise awareness of issues as an aid to advocacy	14%
To increase access to services for particular groups	14%
To tie in with the mission statement	7%
As an aid to developing services	7%

OCCASIONALLY

Category	Percentage
As an educational or training tool	57%
To tie in with the mission statement	50%
As an aid to developing services	43%
To increase access to services for particular groups	36%
To raise awareness of issues as an aid to advocacy	36%
Working towards a specific event	36%
To build community relations	21%
To develop skills of participants	21%
To address a particular issue	21%
As an aid to LT and sustainable community development	21%
To develop or/and extend existing opportunities	14%
To counter sectarianism	14%
Other	7%

The questionnaires offered a number of possibilities and time frames for those possibilities and the responses are outlined in the following table.

Artists would work towards specific events with some frequency 50 per cent of the time, and 36 per cent on occasions.

They would infrequently deliver projects to tie in with the mission statement of the organisation which hosted their projects, only 7 per cent of their activities connected with this orientation, but 50 per cent of responses suggested that occasionally this would be part of the project orientation.

There were 21 per cent of responses which suggested that this had never been the reason to deliver a project.

When asked if community arts projects had been used to tackle a particular issue, in this case racism, poverty or social exclusion, 43 per cent of responses suggested that this happened frequently and 21 per cent suggested on occasion.

For building community relations 50 per cent responded frequently and another 21 per cent of responses suggested on occasion.

When we look at developing skills through the use of community arts projects or for educational or training purposes, 43 per cent of responses suggest that community arts projects are used frequently.

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This alters when we ask about use for educational purposes where the responses drop to 21 per cent, although when we look at a lesser rate of frequency, education rises to 57 per cent when asked if on occasion community arts is the vehicle.

Community Arts projects are less likely to be used frequently for raising awareness or for advocacy purposes, with 14 per cent of responses suggesting this. However they were more likely to be used on occasion for this purpose, 36 per cent of responses.

There wasn't a high response to frequent use of community arts projects to develop services but 36 per cent of responses suggested that community arts would be used frequently for long term community development.

Question 4 – Session rate

Segment 9 – Table 4. Frequency of project sessions

Number of sessions	Artists	Percentage
One off	7	41%
2-sessions	7	41%
6-10 sessions	10	60%
3-6 months	5	30%
6-12 months	1	7%
1 year +	4	21%
Other	1	7%

Segment 9 – Figure 4. Frequency of project sessions

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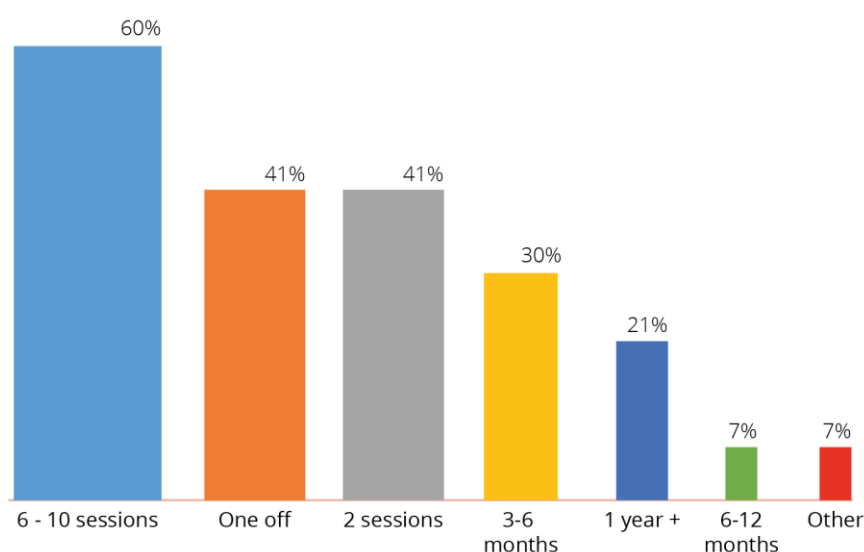
When we whittle the delivery of projects into sessions we find that rather than ongoing long term projects, the tendency is for the projects to be delivered in bursts of small numbers of sessions and there is some crossover here as artists have different delivery time frames for different projects.

Over 60 per cent of the rural projects our respondents were responsible for conducting were delivered over a period of between 6 and 10 sessions, some projects had longer time frames with 30 percent delivered over 3-6 months and a small number delivered over the period of a full year.

Of all the projects our artist respondents conducted, 4 projects were delivered over a period of longer than one year.

Seven projects were delivered as one off sessions and another 7 were delivered over 2-3 sessions.

Question 5 – Prevention of activity because of difficulties

Segment 9 – Table 5. Prevention of activity because of difficulties

Difficulties identified	Number of Artists	Percentage
If the location of the project is remote and difficult to get to	2	14%
The expense of travelling to the location	8	47%
The time of travelling to the location	3	18%
Not knowing very much about rural issues	0	0%
Lack of access to resources	1	7%
Other	0	0%
No problem with travel	7	41%

Segment 9 – Figure 5. Prevention of activity because of difficulties
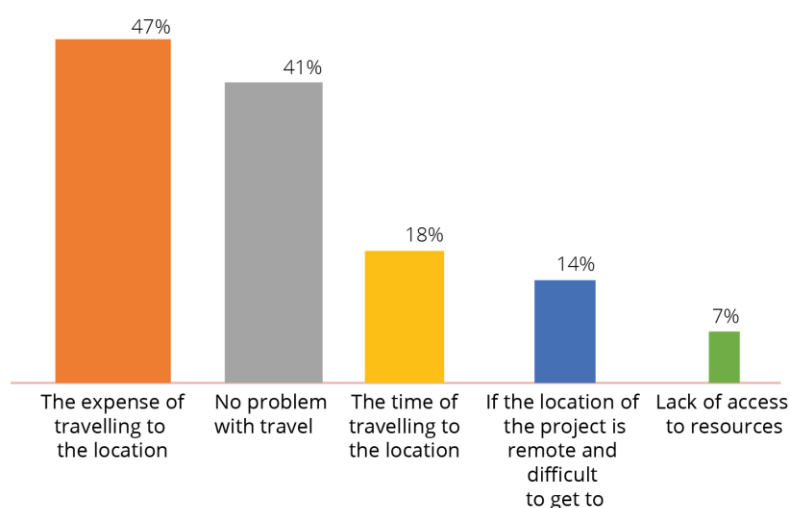
Respondents were asked if there were any difficulties with regards travelling to rural areas, or other issues which would make it difficult for them individually to carry out community arts projects in rural areas.

Of all responses 42 per cent indicated that they had no issues arising from working in rural areas.

Forty-eight per cent of responses indicated that the expense of travelling was an issue for them.

Eighteen per cent put forward that time spent travelling was something which concerned them and would inhibit their working in rural areas and there were some respondents who felt that travelling to remote areas created problems and a lack of access to resources concerned 6 per cent of respondents.

Question 6 – Outcomes

Segment 9 – Table 6. Outcomes

Outcomes	Artists	Percentage
Exhibition	8	47%
Music CD	1	7%
Film	5	30%
Artwork for the community	7	41%
Performance	4	21%
Other - Publications	2	14%
No outcomes	4	21%

Segment 9 – Figure 6. Outcomes

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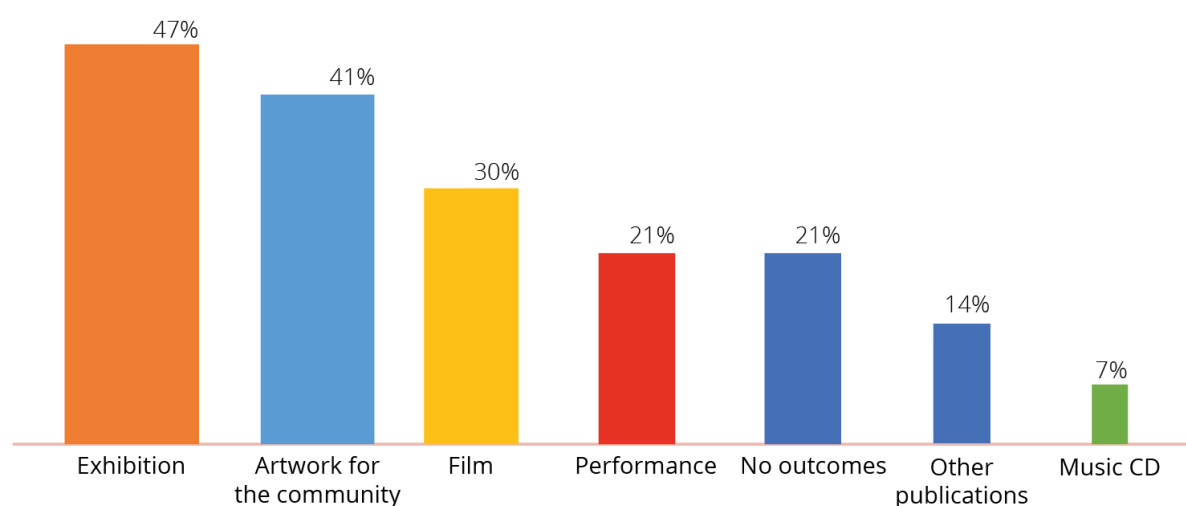
Often community arts projects have the production of materials or showcases of the achievements of the participants associated with the completion or projects.

While 24 per cent of respondents had not been involved in the production of specific materials or the organisation of showcases, 48 per cent had organised exhibitions of the art works produced by participants, 42 per cent had been involved in organising community exhibitions of artworks, 30 per cent had produced a film or video, 24 per cent had organised performances on completion of their community arts projects, 12 per cent had been involved with the production of a publication and a small number roughly 6 per cent of respondents had used the community arts projects to produce a music cd.

Once the questionnaires had established the experience of our respondents, it was necessary to investigate the thoughts of our artists and arts practitioners with regards working in rural communities using community arts as a vehicle to offer both creative opportunities but also with the added potential of looking at ways to promote change.

Section 3 – Working in rural communities

Question 1 – The Pressing Issues

Segment 9 – Table 7. Pressing issues in Rural Communities

Pressing issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Social isolation	5	3	1		1						
Access to Services	3	1	4	1	2						
Sectarianism		2	1	1							1
Community Relations	1	1		2	2					1	
Youth Unemployment	1	4			1			1			
Unemployment in general	3	1	1				1				
Poverty	1	1	1	4		1					
Racism		1	1	3	1						
Lack of opportunities in Education and Training		2	4	2							
Lack of opportunities in retraining		2	4	2							
Lack of opportunities general	6	4			1	1					
Other – No facilities			3								

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	Agree somewhat	Agree	Very much agree
Lack of opportunities in general	115		187
Social Isolation	112		187
Access to services	101		187
Lack of opportunities in Education and Training	72		187
Poverty	68		187
Youth unemployment	62		187
Unemployment	62		187
Community relations	54		187
Lack of opportunities in re-training	53		187
Sectarianism	30		187
Racism	29		187

50%
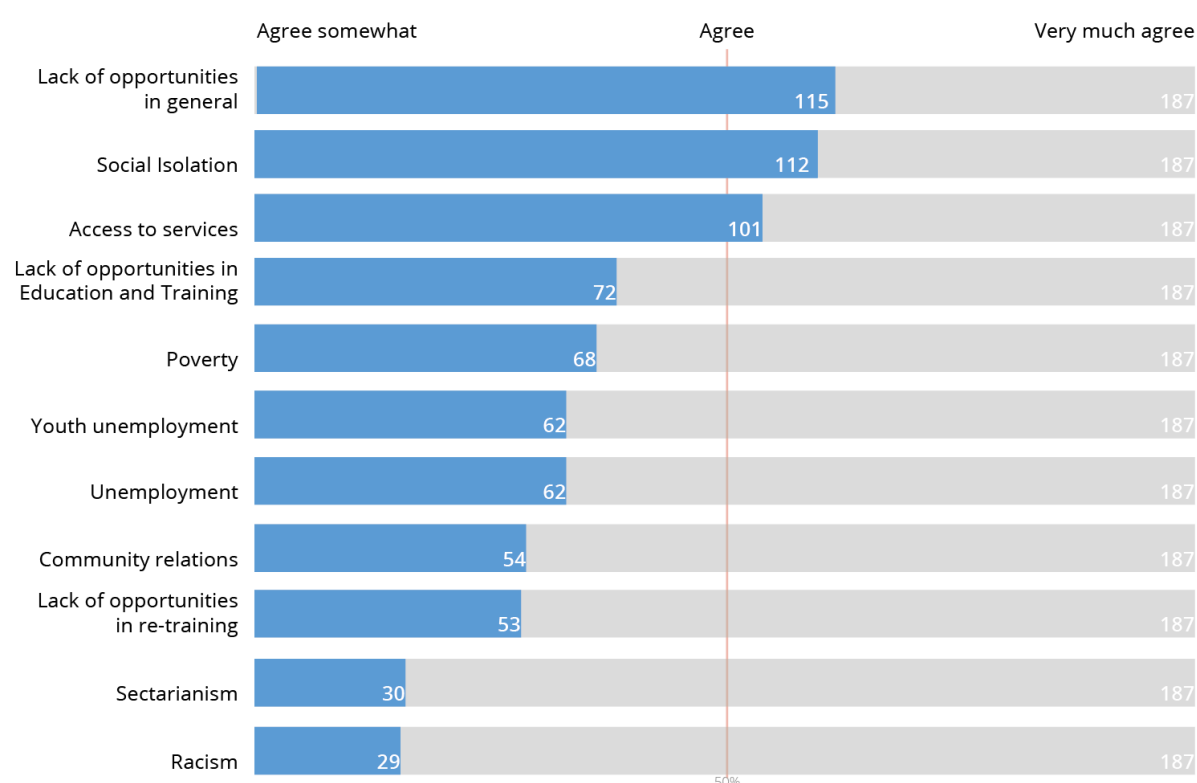
Respondents were asked what they thought were the most pressing issues in rural communities and from there how might those issues be ranked.

This particular question elicited an interesting response because some of the respondents felt that the issues were all equally pressing, all equally important, that the level of importance might be better ranked by allocating 1 and 2's rather than a league table of issues from 1 through to 11.

To allow all respondents an equal say, a table was organised which recorded all allocations of all the rankings on offer and a score was awarded to each ranking position.

(If a respondent ranked an issue with a 1 that 1 was accorded a score of 12 whereas a rankling on 12 would be allocated a score of 1).

From this ranking system, it appears as if lack of opportunity, social isolation, poverty and unemployment far outweigh social issues such as community relations, racism and sectarianism as key issues community artists might be expecting to address through community arts practice.

There were in addition to the issues raised as pressing a couple of other issues put forward. Those were, a lack of expectation that rural communities deserved better and a disconnection from the arts believing them to be for those better off, better educated people but these received very little in the way of support.

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Question 2 – Use of Community Arts practice to address pressing issues

Seventy seven per cent of respondents believe that Community Arts can be used to address pressing issues in rural communities. Some respondents qualified that support by responding as to why they believed this,

"My work in Dungannon leads me to work closely with young people from different ethnic backgrounds to give them a voice, a sense of belonging but to also tackle racism and prejudice. Adults with disabilities are very socially deprived in Dungannon area also and to have access to arts is a very empowering thing."

"I believe that the Arts can make a real difference in rural communities when tackling real issues. It provides people in rural communities with a new tool to explore issues that affect them every day. It helps create excitement and learning for something new, and acts as a tool to have their voice heard in a new way."

"Most rural communities do not have the visible signs of sectarianism that we associate with more urban areas however they are invariably strictly divided by the religious divide with little opportunity to meet, let along converse with, members of the other community. The artist can provide a neutral creative space to bring rural communities together that is non-confrontational, non-denominational and safe. The artist can facilitate dialogue and conversation through the medium of art in a way that does not put participants under the spotlight and scrutiny of other members of the often tight-knit rural community.

"Members of rural communities can often lack confidence in their abilities, as they do not have access to the same services, educational opportunities, employment and training as their urban counterparts. Huge issues around rural poverty hold people back from developing their skills and reaching their full potential in many areas of life. The artist can help provide opportunities for developing skills and confidence through the provision of materials and facilitation of programs in rural areas."

"The artist can help communities to re-evaluate how their community looks and is seen by themselves and others. A community seen through a visual artist's perspective can be framed in new and different ways than might previously have been experienced. This can lead to rural communities taking new confidence and pride in their areas and the journeys they have taken through the Troubles."

"People need the arts to experience their creativity, to generate a strong sense of identity, belonging and to feel a sense of agency over their lives."

"Through my experience through doing a lot of workshops with adults with learning difficulties and in the mental health sector it gives purpose, involvement of an activity, social interaction as a group and achievement when a project is completed."

Question 3 – Difficulties associated with delivery of projects

Segment 9 – Table 8. Difficulties associated with delivery of projects

Issue	Very Difficult		Some Difficulty		No Difficulty		Not Sure	
Lack of Interest			6	36%	3	18%		
Lack of adequate resources	2	14%	6	36%	1	7%		
Difficulties in participants getting to the activities			7	41%	3	18%		
Lacking knowledge of rural areas	1	7%	1	7%	6	36%		
Inconsistent attendance	1	7%	3	18%	5	30%		
Lack of adequate space	2	14%	4	21%	2	14%		
Participants don't understand CA	3	21%	4	21%	2	14%		
Host organisation doesn't understand CA	1	7%	4	21%	3	18%	1	7%
Always the same people attending			6	36%	1	7%	1	7%
Certain communities never access the activities	2	14%	4	21%			2	14%
Difficulties in getting people to attend long term	1	7%	3	18%	3	18%	2	14%
Difficulties in communication between hosts participants and artists	1	7%	2	14%	4	21%	1	7%
Differences in aims between organisation participants through CA	1	7%	4	21%	3	18%	3	18%
Other							1	7%

VERY DIFFICULT

Category	Percentage
Participants don't understand CA	21%
Lack of adequate resources	14%
Certain communities never access activities	14%
Lack of adequate space	14%
Differences in aims between organisation participants through CA	7%
Host organisation doesn't understand CA	7%
Inconsistent attendance	7%
Difficulties in getting people to attend long term	7%
Difficulties in communication between hosts participants and artists	7%
Lacking knowledge of rural areas	7%
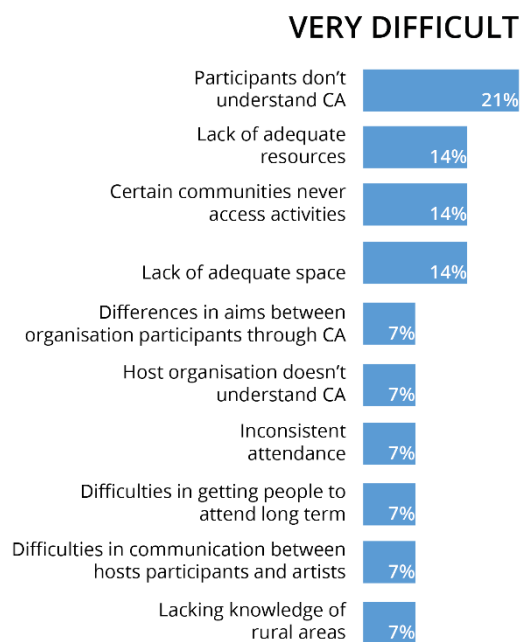
Segment 9 – **Figure 9.** Difficulties associated with delivery of projects

SOME DIFFICULTY

Category	Percentage
Difficulties in participants getting to the activities	41%
Lack of Interest	36%
Always the same people attending	36%
Lack of adequate resources	36%
Participants don't understand CA	21%
Certain communities never access activities	21%
Lack of adequate space	21%
Differences in aims between organisation participants through CA	21%
Host organisation doesn't understand CA	21%
Inconsistent attendance	18%
Difficulties in getting people to attend long term	18%
Difficulties in communication between hosts participants and artists	14%
Lacking knowledge of rural areas	7%

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NO DIFFICULTY

Category	Percentage
Lacking knowledge of rural areas	36%
Inconsistent attendance	30%
Difficulties in communication between hosts participants and artists	21%
Differences in aims between organisation participants through CA	18%
Host organisation doesn't understand CA	18%
Difficulties in getting people to attend long term	18%
Difficulties in participants getting to the activities	18%
Lack of Interest	18%
Participants don't understand CA	14%
Lack of adequate space	14%
Lack of adequate resources	7%
Always the same people attending	7%

This particular question did not offer any real sense of a hierarchy of difficulties. From the responses offered, there was some sense that a lack of understanding by participants of Community Arts theory and practices could make project delivery very difficult. Some sense also that lack of adequate space and resources could cause problems.

A concern was raised that certain communities did not attend events.

Beyond that respondents experienced some difficulty with a host of issues, lack of interest, lack of adequate resources, difficulties with travel, inconsistent attendance, lack of space, participants and hosts exhibiting a lack of understanding of community arts theory and practice, difficulties with long-term attendance, communication problems and problems with differences in aims between participants and host organisations, but by and large responses were spread evenly across the possibilities offered to choose from.

Question 4 – Rural Knowledge

And when asked if there was a possibility that a greater knowledge of rural issues might enhance delivery of community arts projects, 65 per cent of respondents agreed with this idea, 25 per cent didn't respond and around 10 per cent offered no response.

Question 5 – Changing style of delivery

When the artists were asked if they had ever had to change their facilitation style to deliver a community arts project, 42 per cent reported that they did have to do that.

"My experience in rural areas is that participants in general seem to be more interested in the social aspect of the group gathering. Participants may all already know each other through their families and communities so I, as the artist/facilitator, may be the only 'outsider'. I would therefore be very conscious of the dynamics of the group and on taking plenty of time to introduce the project and myself and of allowing time for tea breaks and opportunities to chat and socialise."

"If I have not met with the group it can be difficult to judge what to aim for to make with the group, varying levels of ability and timescale can be an issue."

"Sometimes you have to take into consideration, people's ages, their abilities, interests, previous experience, as these can all impact on your programme."

"Often you have to ensure that you have to work to the host organisation's brief, as well as research the area you are working in; in regional areas working with issue based practice you need to research the area and the people you will be working with and you need to communicate with them to work out what is required."

In terms of other responses, 25 per cent had never had to change their facilitation style and 33 per cent gave no response.

The final questions asked about the benefits of community arts and beyond that what changes artists thought were required to improve the general situation regarding delivery of community arts projects in rural communities.

Respondents were asked to identify key changes and then to rank them and again respondents tended to interpret this a little eclectically,

Responses were valued in much the same way as the previous rank based questions and from that tables were produced.

Section 4 - How can the arts support work in rural areas

Question 1 – What would you consider to be the main benefits of community arts projects?

Segment 9 – Table 9. Main benefits of community arts projects

Benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Participants are more confident	6	1	1								1	
Brings communities closer together	8	2			1							
Helps improve community relations	2	3	1	1	1							1
Develops new skills	6	2		2	3							
Breaks down barriers between people	3	2	1		1	1			1			
Fun	2	1	3		2							
Increases opportunities	4	1		4	1							
Easily accessible	3			2								
Helps people get jobs	2		2	1								
Promotes Physical and mental well-being	4	1	1	3	2			1				
Promotes social inclusion	4	1	2	1	3				1			
Contributes to education and training	2	2			3	1						
Sensitive to individual needs	2	4		1	1		2					
Works for all ages	3		1		2			1				
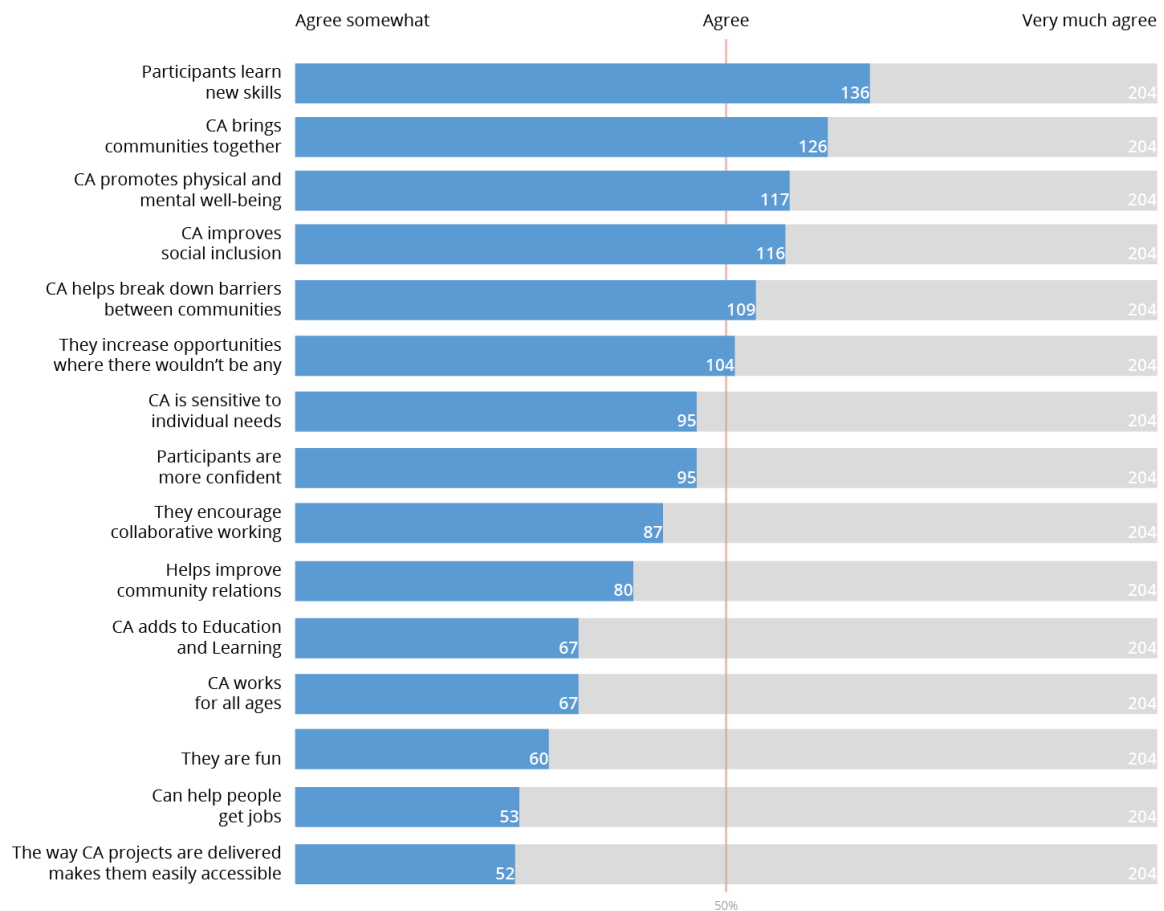
There was almost universal agreement that community arts projects offered substantial benefits to participants.

In terms of ranking those benefits, learning new skills, bringing communities together, promotes well-being, promotes inclusion and breaks down barriers were considered to be the top 5 benefits.
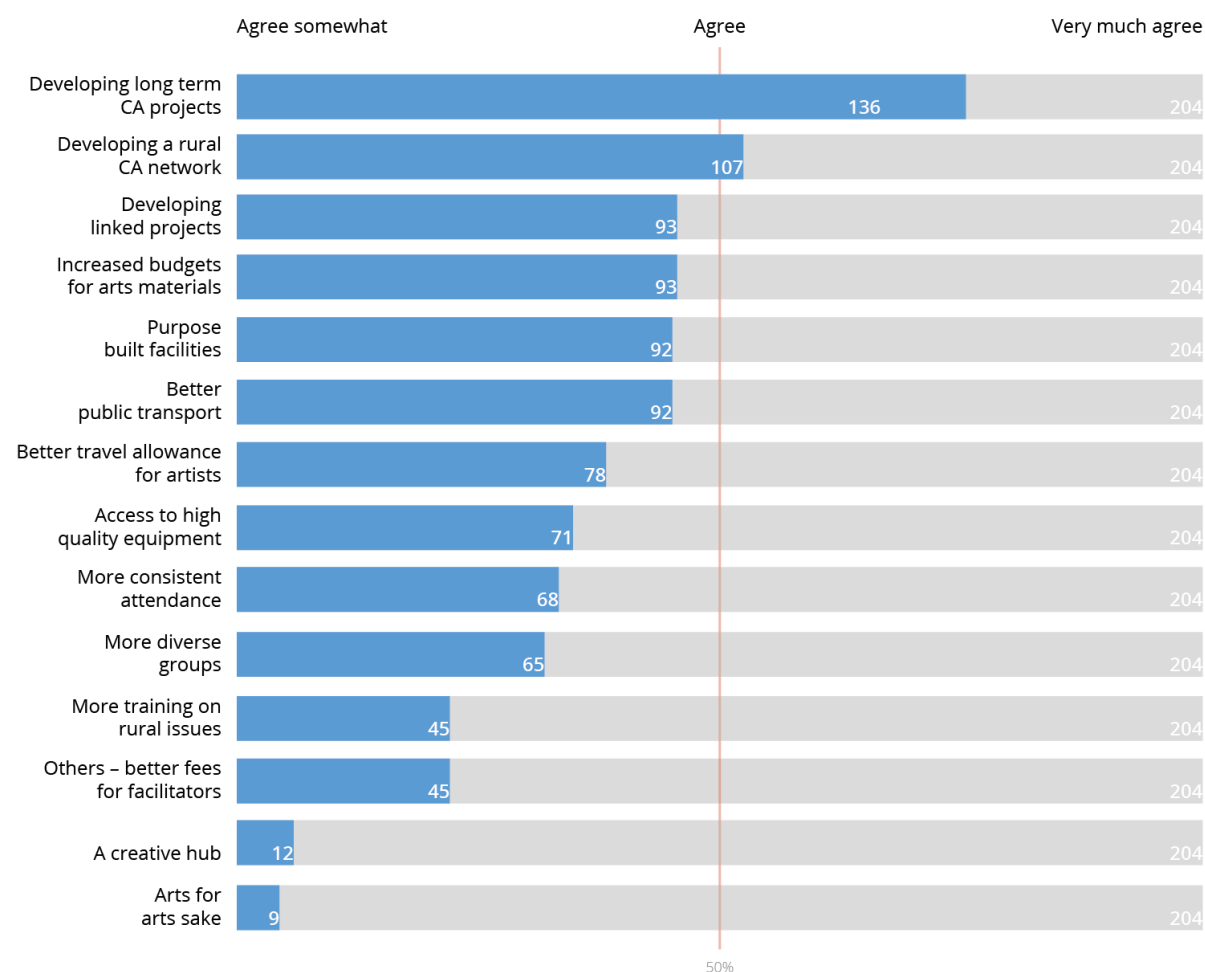
A lesser ranking was given to benefits such as community arts projects being easily accessible, helped people get jobs, they were fun or they were sensitive to individual people's needs.

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Question 2 – In an ideal world

Segment 9 – Table 10. Main needs

Needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Better public transport	4	2		1	1			1			
Better travel allowance for artists	3		1		4						
More training on rural issues	2	1	1								
Developing a rural CA network	5	1	1	2	1						
Developing long term CA projects	9	1	2		1	1					
More consistent attendance	2	2			2		1				
More diverse groups	2		1	1	1	1					
Developing linked projects	3	4	1		1						
Access to high quality equipment	2	1	2		2						
Purpose built facilities	2	2	3		2						
Increased budgets for arts materials		3	3	3	1						
Others – better fees for facilitators	2	1	1								
A creative hub	1										
Arts for arts sake				1							

	Agree somewhat	Agree	Very much agree
Developing long term CA projects	136		204
Developing a rural CA network	107		204
Developing linked projects	93		204
Increased budgets for arts materials	93		204
Purpose built facilities	92		204
Better public transport	92		204
Better travel allowance for artists	78		204
Access to high quality equipment	71		204
More consistent attendance	68		204
More diverse groups	65		204
More training on rural issues	45		204
Others – better fees for facilitators	45		204
A creative hub	12		204
Arts for arts sake	9		204

50%

The final question in the Artist's questionnaire asked if there was a wish list i.e. in an ideal world what support would you need to provide high quality arts projects.

Again a ranking system was used and again respondents tended to be quite liberal with the allocation of rank.

Developing long term community arts project, developing a rural community arts network, developing projects which linked into each other, increasing budgets for arts materials and access to purpose built facilities were the top priorities for change offered by the respondents.

Some artists offered final comments

"Community arts projects in rural areas have the same difficulties as in urban, but added to this is that often groups have little or no experience of arts projects, don't know what to expect, and often are under direction from funders to have a specific outcome.

Rural centres often have had same opportunities as urban ones, but on a good note, generally are happy to have something going on in their area, and participants once hooked are happy to keep coming back, whereas in urban projects participants have a lot of choice and don't appreciate the amount of work their workers put into organizing project.

A good community worker has their finger on what the group wants, and if you can work in partnership, all goes well. If not you can find yourself at a project in the middle of nowhere with no participants."

"I have never really let the travel stop me from working in a particular area. My experience has also shown me that people in rural areas are so grateful for any type of creative sessions, they feel included and part of a wider society when they are offered creative sessions and projects. I feel it helps them feel part of a wider community, not just a place that people have forgotten about"

"As someone originally from a rural area, I had real difficulties accessing good dance classes and training or arts projects in general. Many were taught by teachers not trained and were expensive. I run dance classes with long term outcomes, performance opportunities not only in the area but in Belfast, Dublin and further afield which are free or at a very low cost. Transport for participants is also an issue particularly for those further outside towns and villages."

"I am from a rural community originally, and so in some respects, I have a sense of belonging. Sometimes people want a longer time to just get a feel for things and to slow down – I think that is a good thing."

"Rural communities groups tend to be less confident in their artistic abilities so I would spend more time on warm up and confidence building activities."

CHAPTER SEVEN

QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION
- PARTICIPANTS

# CHAPTER 7: Quantitative Information - Participants

Section 1: Your experience of Community Arts activities?

How many Community Arts projects have you taken part in over the past five years (see introduction on page 1 for definition of Community Arts)?

Segment 10 – Table 1. Participation in Community Arts projects

Numbers of Projects	Participants	Percentage
5+	4	13%
>5	27	81%
0	1	3%
No response	1	3%

Segment 10 – Figure 1. Participation in Community Arts projects
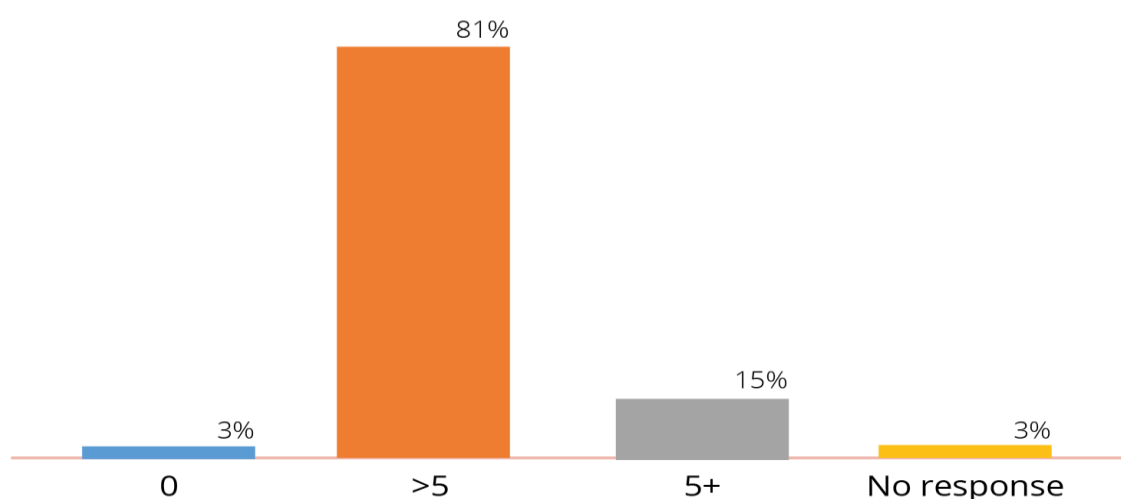
What was clear from the responses to the initial questions in the questionnaire, that the respondents had a relatively high level of experience of taking part in community arts activities with 94 per cent of respondents having taken part in between 1 and 5 Community Arts projects and a small grouping, 13 per cent of respondent's having experience of 5 or more projects.

Section 2

Please say which type of Community Arts activities you have taken part in.

Segment 10 – Table 2. Type of Community Arts activities

Artistic Activity	Participants	Percentage
Literature and Verbal Arts (inc poetry)	3	9%
Fashion	7	21%
Drawing / Painting	11	33%
Sculpture	8	24%
Murals	2	6%
Mosaic	2	6%
Film-making, animation	10	30%
Dance	9	27%
Music	12	36%
Photography	13	39%
Circus skills	3	9%
Carnival arts (mask and costume making)	7	21%
Craft (inc sewing, knitting, crochet)	9	27%
Traditional arts (inc music, dance, craft)	5	15%
Drama and theatre	12	36%
Other (please specify)	2	6%

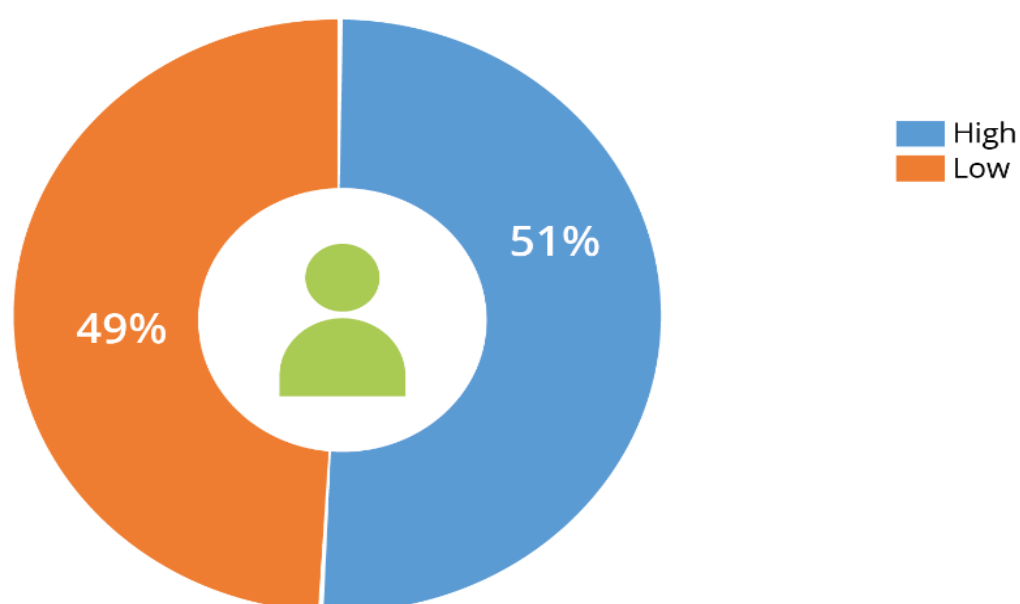**Segment 10 – Figure 2.** Type of Community Arts activities
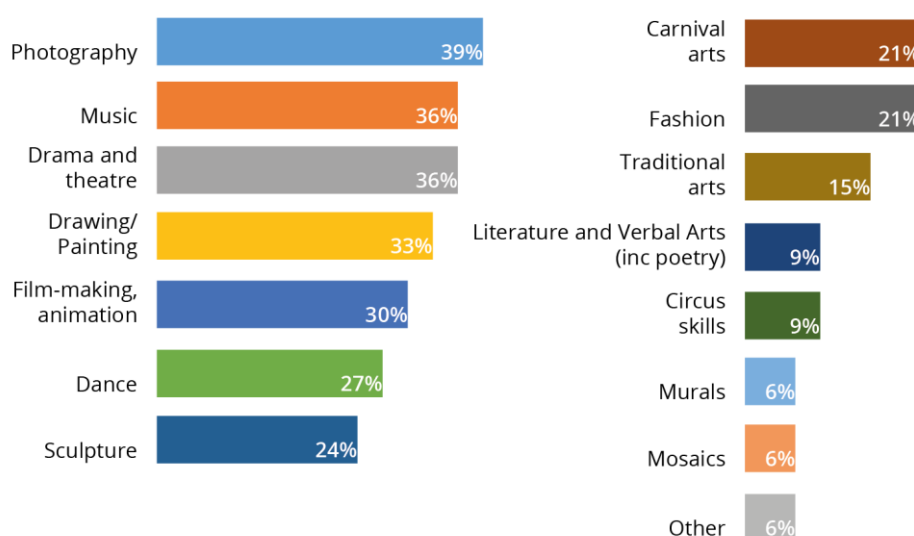
The respondents have a wide range of artistic interests having participated in no less than 16 genres spanning Literature and Verbal Arts through to Ceramics and Film-making.

How often do you take part in Community Arts activities?

Segment 10 – Table 3. Frequency of Community Arts activities

Activity – where once per week is high	Participants	Percentage
High	17	51%
Low	14	49%

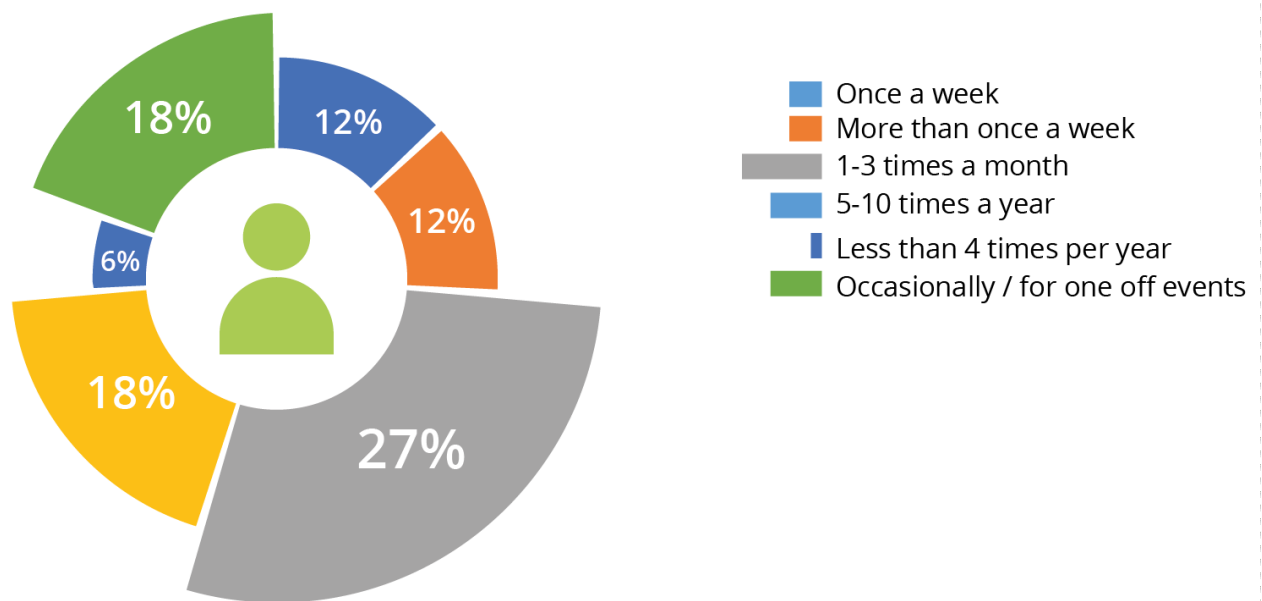**Segment 10 – Figure 3.** Frequency of Community Arts activities

Segment 10 – Table 4. Frequency of Community Arts activities (2)

Frequency	Participants	Percentage
Once a week	4	12%
More than once a week	4	12%
1-3 times per month	9	27%
5-10 times per year	6	18%
Less than 4 times per year	2	6%
Occasionally / for one off events	6	18%

Legend:
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- 1-3 times a month
- 5-10 times a year
- Less than 4 times per year
- Occasionally / for one off events

Values shown: 12%, 12%, 27%, 18%, 6%, 18%

Not only do the participant respondents have high levels of experience of Community Arts activities, and participate in a wide range of artistic activities, the frequency of participation appears high also.

Almost 50 per cent of responses indicate that the participation rate is in the region of once a week, with 12 per cent of people participating more than once a week and another 12 per cent participating at least once a week.

Of all the participants just under a third participated a little less than once a week.
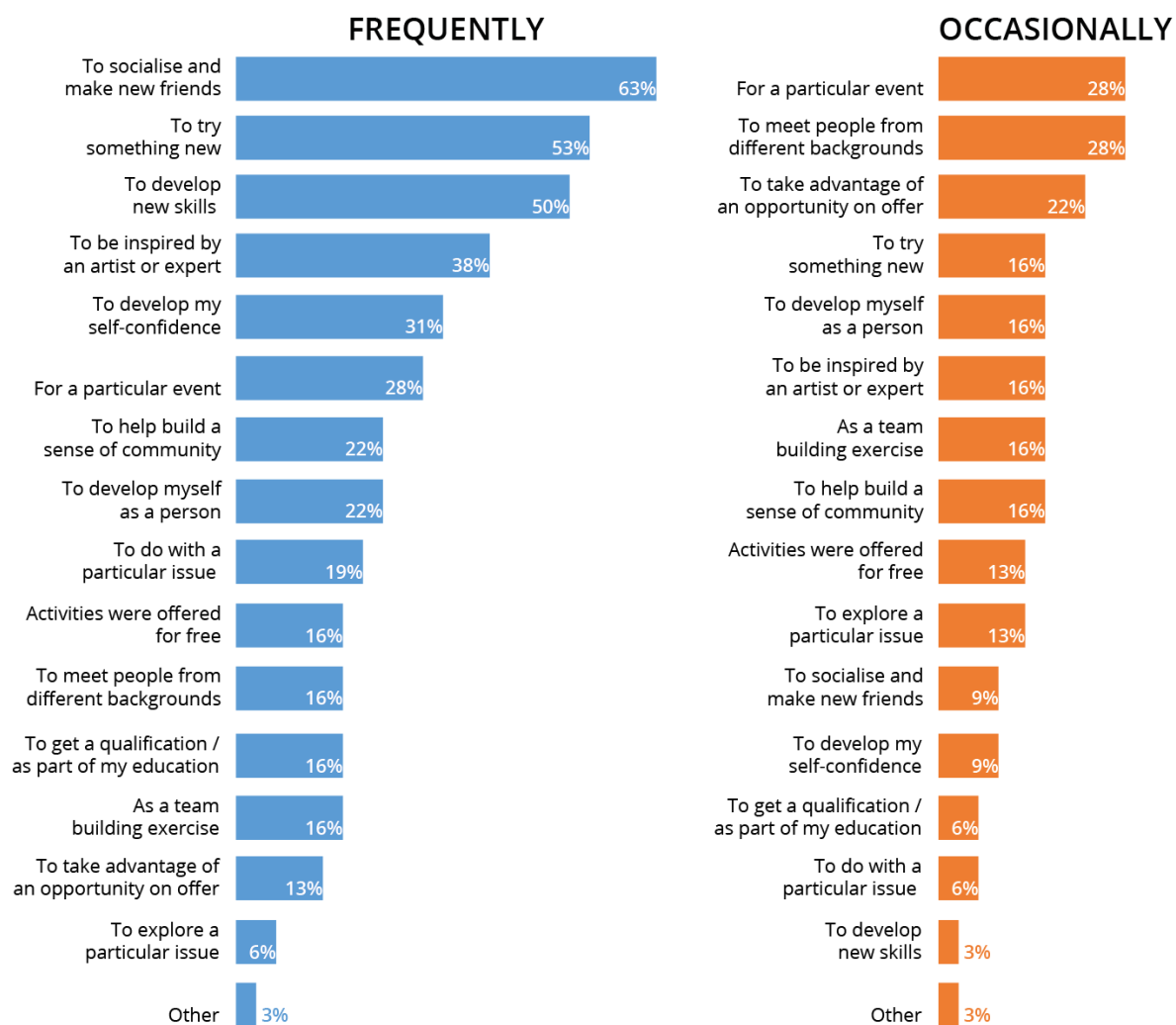
Eighteen per cent of responses indicated that for some people Community Arts activities were entered into on occasions, generally infrequently and sometimes on a one off basis.
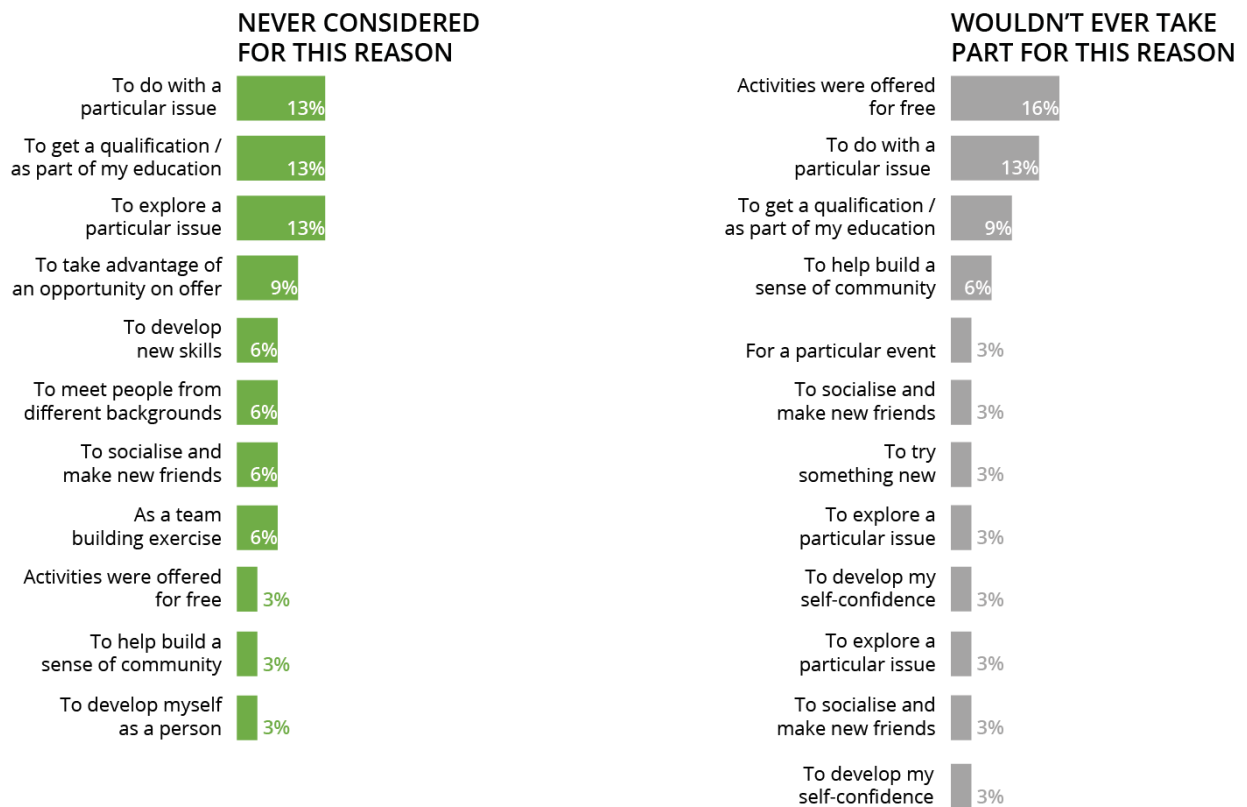
Why have you taken part in these activities?

Segment 10 – Table 5. Reasons of participation

Reason	Frequently		Occasionally		Have never considered for this reason		Wouldn't ever take part for this reason	
For a particular event	9	28%	9	28%	0	0%	1	3%
Activities were offered for free	5	16%	4	13%	1	3%	5	16%
To develop new skills (eg communication skills, skills related to a particular job)	16	50%	1	3%	2	6%	0	0%
To do with a particular issue (eg poverty, social isolation, racism)	6	19%	2	6%	4	13%	4	13%
To meet people from different backgrounds	5	16%	9	28%	2	6%	0	0%
To socialise and make new friends	20	63%	3	9%	2	6%	1	3%
To get a qualification / as part of my education	5	16%	2	6%	4	13%	3	9%
To try something new	17	53%	5	16%	0	0%	1	3%
To explore a particular issue (eg a social or political issue)	2	6%	4	13%	4	13%	1	3%
To take advantage of an opportunity on offer	4	13%	7	22%	3	9%	0	0%
As a team building exercise	5	16%	5	16%	2	6%	0	0%
To help build a sense of community	7	22%	5	16%	1	3%	2	6%
To develop my self-confidence	10	31%	3	9%	0	0%	1	3%
To develop myself as a person	7	22%	5	16%	1	3%	0	0%
To be inspired by an artist or expert	12	38%	5	16%	0	0%	1	3%
Other	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%

FREQUENTLY

Reason	%
To socialise and make new friends	63%
To try something new	53%
To develop new skills	50%
To be inspired by an artist or expert	38%
To develop my self-confidence	31%
For a particular event	28%
To help build a sense of community	22%
To develop myself as a person	22%
To do with a particular issue	19%
Activities were offered for free	16%
To meet people from different backgrounds	16%
To get a qualification / as part of my education	16%
As a team building exercise	16%
To take advantage of an opportunity on offer	13%
To explore a particular issue	6%
Other	3%

OCCASIONALLY

Reason	%
For a particular event	28%
To meet people from different backgrounds	28%
To take advantage of an opportunity on offer	22%
To try something new	16%
To develop myself as a person	16%
To be inspired by an artist or expert	16%
As a team building exercise	16%
To help build a sense of community	16%
Activities were offered for free	13%
To explore a particular issue	13%
To socialise and make new friends	9%
To develop my self-confidence	9%
To get a qualification / as part of my education	6%
To do with a particular issue	6%
To develop new skills	3%
Other	3%

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NEVER CONSIDERED FOR THIS REASON

Reason	%
To do with a particular issue	13%
To get a qualification / as part of my education	13%
To explore a particular issue	13%
To take advantage of an opportunity on offer	9%
To develop new skills	6%
To meet people from different backgrounds	6%
To socialise and make new friends	6%
As a team building exercise	6%
Activities were offered for free	3%
To help build a sense of community	3%
To develop myself as a person	3%

WOULDN'T EVER TAKE PART FOR THIS REASON

Reason	%
Activities were offered for free	16%
To do with a particular issue	13%
To get a qualification / as part of my education	9%
To help build a sense of community	6%
For a particular event	3%
To socialise and make new friends	3%
To try something new	3%
To explore a particular issue	3%
To develop my self-confidence	3%
To explore a particular issue	3%
To socialise and make new friends	3%
To develop my self-confidence	3%

When people were questioned regarding why they might take part in community arts activities, respondents were likely to participate in community arts projects because this is a good way to socialise, 20 frequent responses, people enjoyed trying something new, 17 frequent responses, participants suggested they could develop new skills through community arts activities, 16 frequent responses, with the idea of being inspired by an artist receiving 12 frequent responses.

Participants would attend a community arts activity because they were attracted to a specific event, 9 frequent responses and 9 responses for an occasional attraction.

They were just as likely to attend because an event was free as they were not to see this as an important factor with 5 responses for each possibility.

By and large the participants found they were as likely to attend arts activities to build confidence, 10 frequent responses, as they might attend issue based activities, 7 frequent responses.
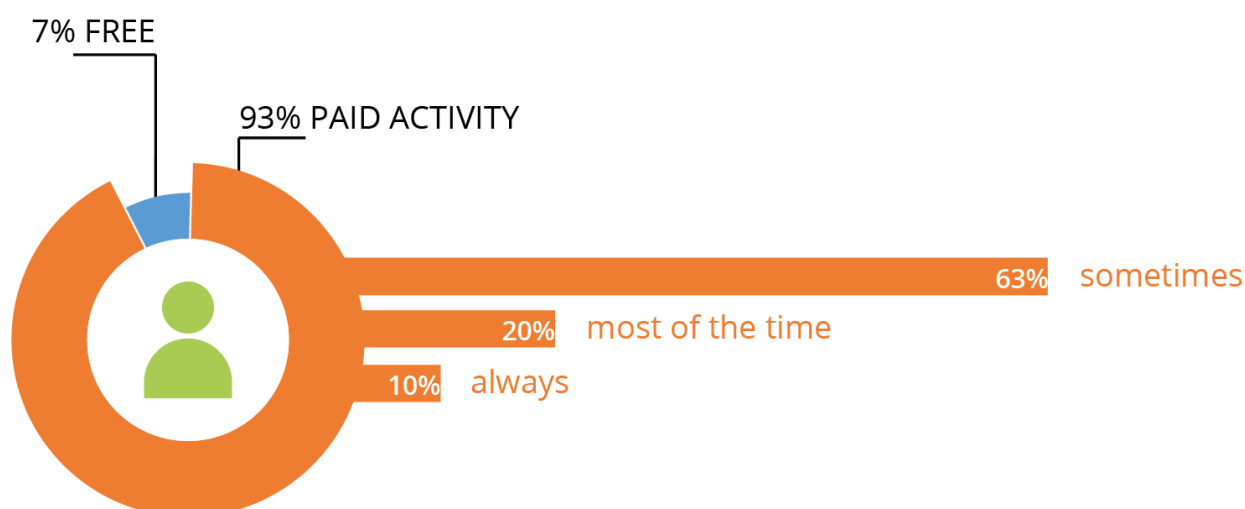
Do you ever pay to take part in activities?

Paid and free activities

Paid activity	28	93%
Free	2	7%

Segment 10 – Table 7. Frequency of payment

Frequency of payment	Participants	Percentage
Never	2	7%
Sometimes	19	63%
Most of the time	6	20%
Always	3	10%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

Segment 10 – Figure 7. Frequency of payment

Surprisingly, large numbers of respondents paid for their access to community arts activities.

While Community Arts Partnership delivers projects free at the point of delivery, 93 per cent of respondents paid to participate, with 10 per cent of respondents always paying, 20 per cent paying most of the time and 63 per cent paying on occasion

Have you ever produced anything at the end of a project?

Outcomes

Outcome	Participants	Percentage
Exhibition	11	26%
Music CD	4	9%
Film	7	16%
Artwork produced for the community	10	23%
Performance	9	21%
Other	2	5%

Segment 10 – Figure 8. Outcomes
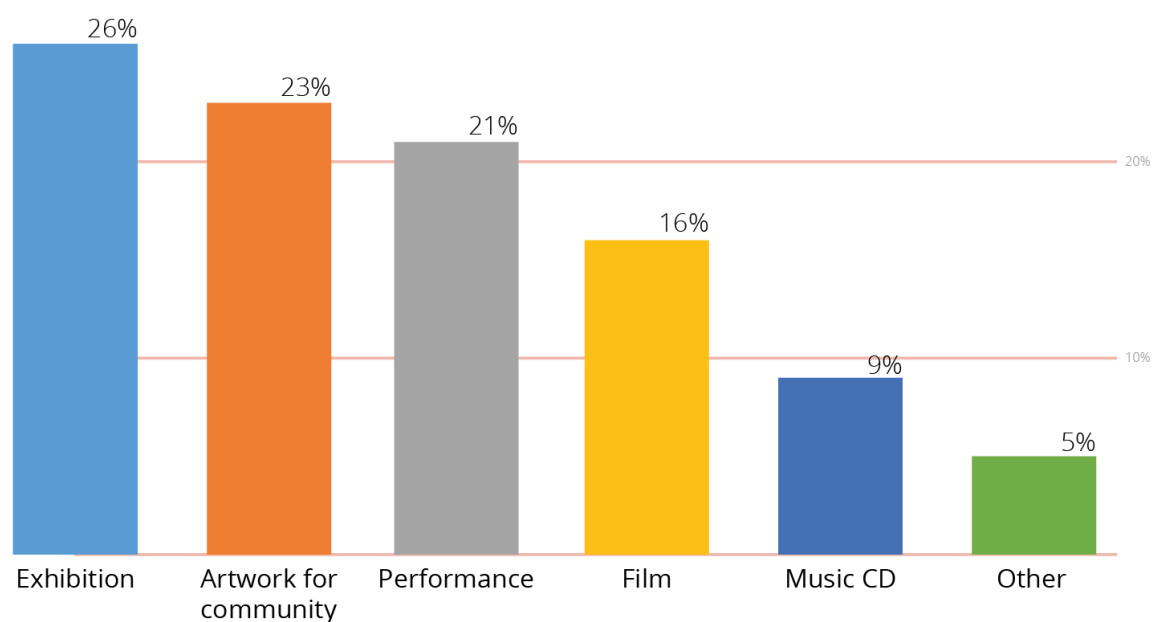
Every respondent had been party to the production of artistic material through their involvement in community arts projects ranging from visual arts exhibitions, 26 per cent, through to art works for viewing by their local community, 23 per cent, and performances, 21 per cent.

What benefits are there from taking part in Community Arts?

Benefit	Very much agree		Agree somewhat		Don't agree		Not sure	
I am more confident as a result of taking part	18	55%	4	12%	0	0	1	3%
I get to meet people from diverse communities	16	48%	3	9%	1	3%	3	9%
C.A. help improve community relations	12	36%	7	21%	0	0	1	3%
I get to learn new skills	23	70%	4	12%	0	0	0	0
C.A. help break down barriers between people	11	33%	4	12%	1	3%	2	6%
They encourage ways of working together	22	67%	3	9%	0	0	0	0
They are fun	26	79%	0	0	0	0	0	0
They increase the range of activities I get to take part in	20	61%	4	12%	0	0	1	3%
They are easily accessible to everyone	15	45%	2	6%	2	6%	1	3%
C.A. help people get jobs (through skills, confidence building, etc)	12	36%	3	9%	3	9%	3	9%
C.A. help promote physical and mental well-being	11	33%	6	18%	1	3%	1	3%
Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included	21	64%	2	6%	0	0	0	0
C.A. contribute to people's education and training	13	39%	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%
C.A. is sensitive to individual needs	12	36%	1	3%	2	6%	2	6%
C.A. work for all ages	12	36%	1	3%	3	9%	1	3%
C.A. can help to change our surrounding communities	16	48%	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%
Other								

Segment 10 – Figure 9. Benefits

Level of agreement

- I get to learn new skills
- They are fun
- They encourage ways of working together
- They increase the range of activities
- Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included
- I am more confident
- I get to meet people from diverse communities
- C.A. can help to change our surrounding communities
- They are easily accessible to everyone
- C.A. help improve community relations
- C.A. help people get jobs
- C.A. help promote physical and mental wellbeing
- C.A. contribute to people's education and training
- C.A. help break down barriers between people
- C.A. work for all ages
- C.A. is sensitive to individual needs

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A very high level of agreement was reached regarding the benefits of community arts activities, with very few sample responses suggesting that there was any question over the level of benefit received.

The respondents generally very much agreed that there were benefits in terms of building confidence, learning new skills, and increasing their range of activities.

Participants also acknowledged that community arts activities were fun, the single highest level of identification with 26 responses very much in agreement, and that they promoted social inclusion, with 21 responses very much in agreement. There was also general agreement that community arts activities were easily accessible, worked for all ages and aided in increasing education and learning.

Many people sampled agreed that community arts activities encouraged people to work together, 22 responses very much in agreement, that they promoted improved health and well-being, 11 responses very much in agreement and that there could be improvement in community relations if people participated in community arts activities, 12 responses were very much in agreement.

What difficulties have you experienced with Arts activities?

Segment 10 – Table 10. Difficulties with Arts activities

Difficulty	Always a problem	Sometimes a Problem	Never a problem	Not sure
Activities I've been involved with didn't have good resources	9	5	10	2
Transport isn't available to get to activities	11	4	8	2
Activities are at difficult times for me		5	9	2
People who run the activities don't know much about the arts		6	12	
People who run the activities aren't enthusiastic about the arts		4	13	1
Artists running the activities don't know much about life in rural areas	1	8	5	4
Activities are expensive	5	4	7	2
The venue for activities isn't suitable	8	4	7	2
I don't find out about activities in time		8	9	1
At the beginning of the project I don't know anyone	1	9	7	1
I don't have access to the internet to find out information	6	5	10	
Projects don't happen over a long enough time period	7	3	8	2
I don't like activities which are issue based		6	11	1
I want to be able to learn more through the arts	2	4	7	3
Activities aren't well organised	3	5	7	2
Other - lack of Funding	6			

It is reasonable to say that more of our respondents find that resources and transport are issues which present difficulties for them than other issues. Where resources were an issue either always presenting problems or on occasion there were 14 responses and where transport was identified as an issue 15 responses suggested that it was always or sometimes a problem.

Suitability of venues was problematic offering 12 responses, not having access to the internet and not knowing people at the beginning of projects offered 11 and 10 responses respectively.

Other difficulties such as communication problems, or artists not being attuned to rural life were considered lesser problems.

It would seem that more often than not there are more respondents who don't see the issues identified in the questionnaires as problems at all. There were far more responses to the idea that resources, transport, timing, lack of knowledge or enthusiasm about the arts, access to the internet or not wishing to be involved in issue based arts activities did not cause any problems for participants.

Do you get to give feedback and say what you think about the arts activities on a regular basis?

Segment 10 – Table 11. Feedback

Yes	21	63%
No	8	24%
No response	4	13%

Segment 10 – Figure 10. Feedback

136
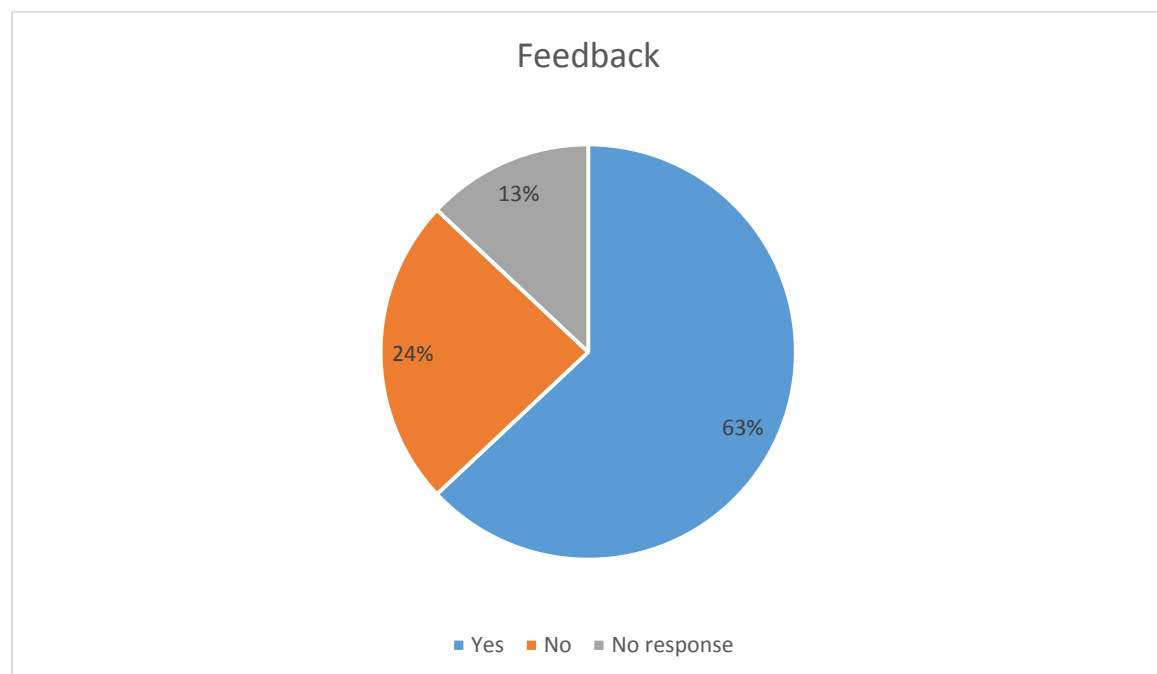
The relationship between participants and practitioners regarding experience of feeding back into the project activities looks promising initially with 63 per cent suggesting that they were able to feedback into the projects they were participating in.

However, nearly a quarter of respondents did not get to give any feedback on their project activities and while over 60 per cent were able to give feedback, the frequency of the feedback was limited, with less than 10 per cent able to give feedback every so often, 30 per cent of participants limited to once per project, and another 9 per cent able to feedback a few times per project.

If so, how often?

Feedback by Participants

Segment 10 – Table 12. Frequency of feedback

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Every week	2	6%
After every workshop	5	15%
Once a month	0	0
More than once per project	3	9%
Once per project	10	30%
2-6 times a year	3	9%
Once a year	0	0
Less than once a year	0	0

Segment 10 – Figure 11. Frequency of feedback

137
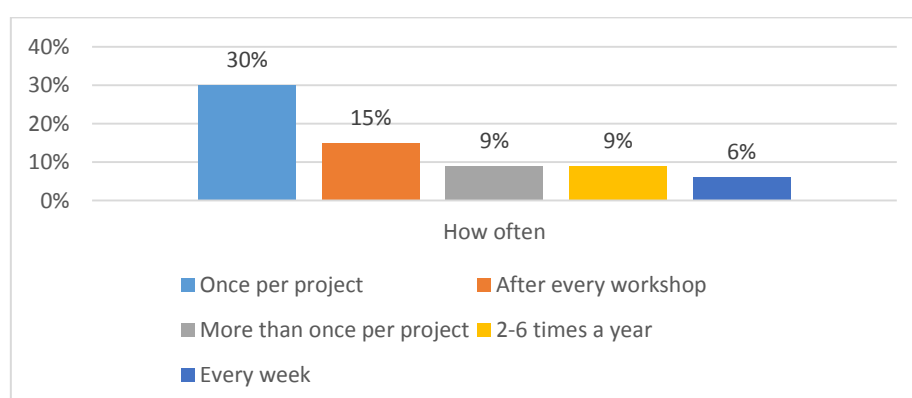
Section 2: About your area

What is the main (60%+) perceived community background of people in your area?

Nationalist	11	33%
Unionist	6	18%
Other	11	33%
No response	5	15%
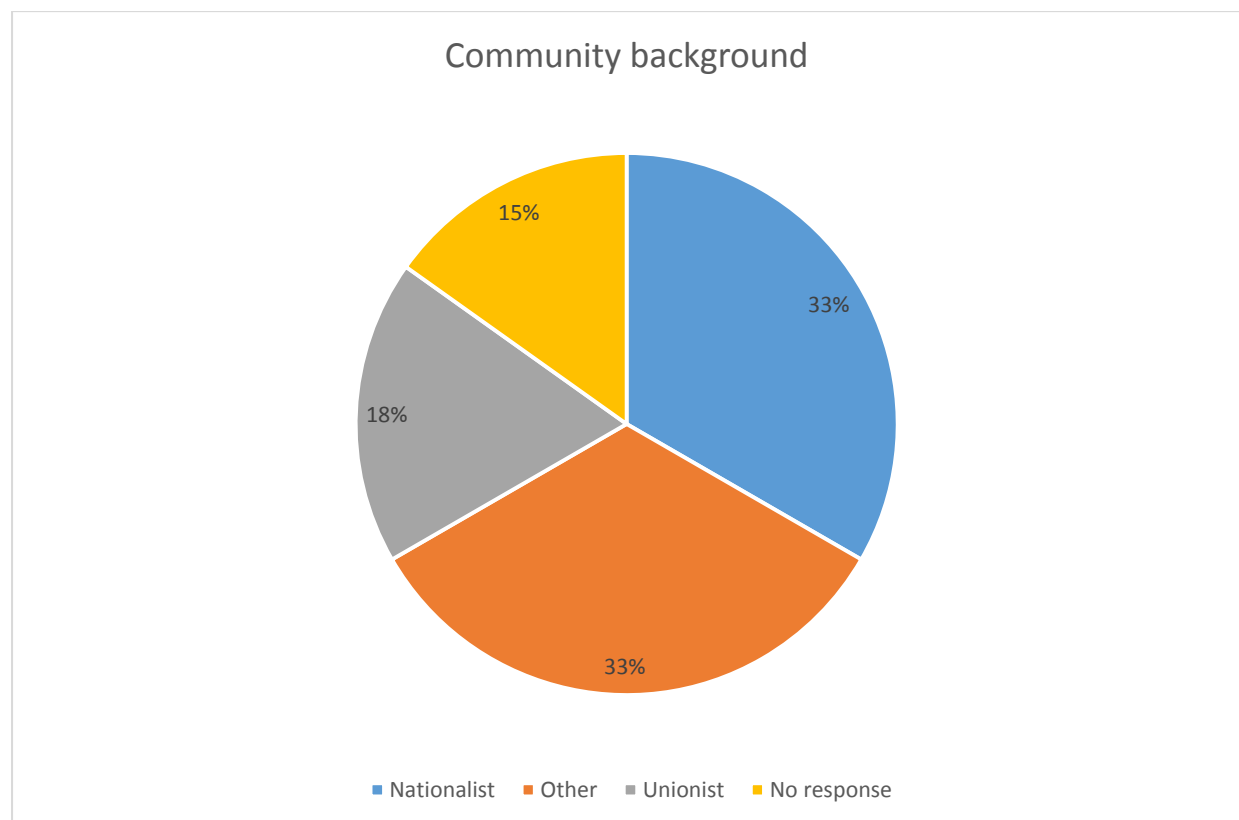
With regards the cultural make-up of respondents, a third said they lived in mixed areas and another third were from a nationalist area. There were 18 per cent of respondents from a unionist area.
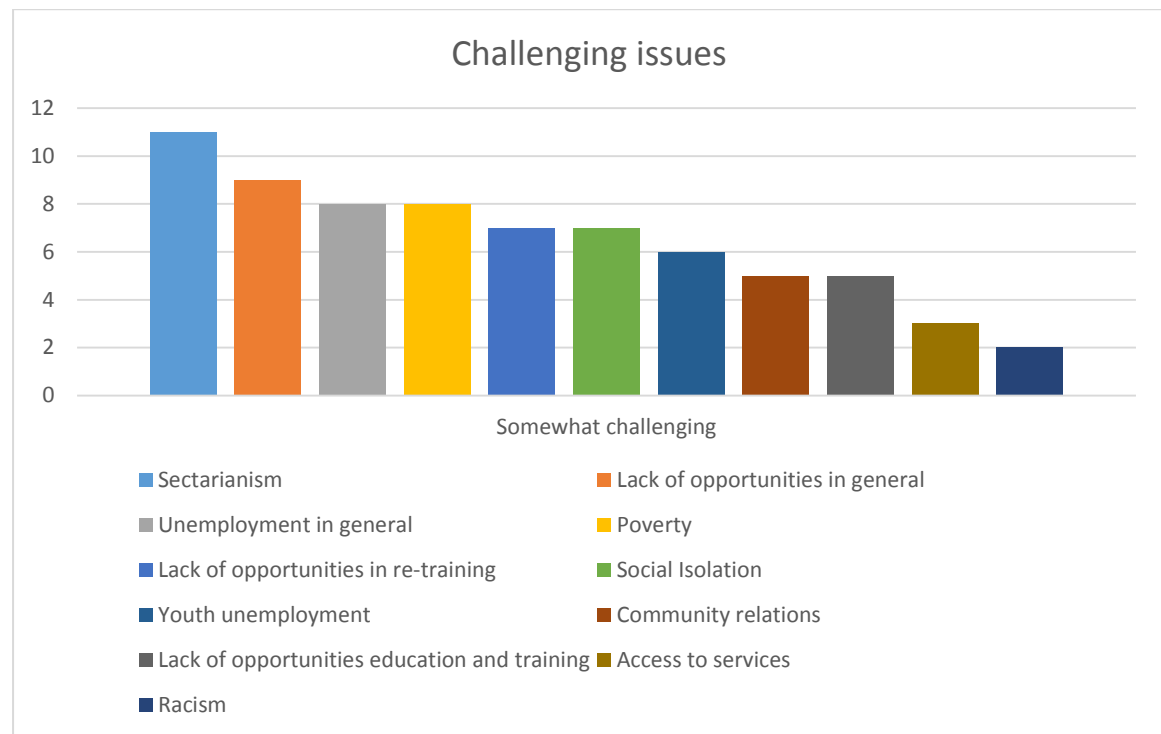
What do you think are the most challenging issues facing people in rural areas?

Segment 10 – Table 14. Most challenging issues

Issue	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Not sure
Social Isolation	17	7	3	2
Access to services	16	3	6	3
Sectarianism	4	11	6	4
Community relations	6	5	8	2
Youth unemployment	11	6	3	3
Unemployment in general	10	8	5	2
Poverty	9	8	3	4
Racism	4	2	9	7
Lack of opportunities in education and training	10	5	3	5
Lack of opportunities in re-training	5	9	4	6
Lack of opportunities in general	9	9	2	1
Other	1			

Segment 10 – Figure 13. Very challenging issues
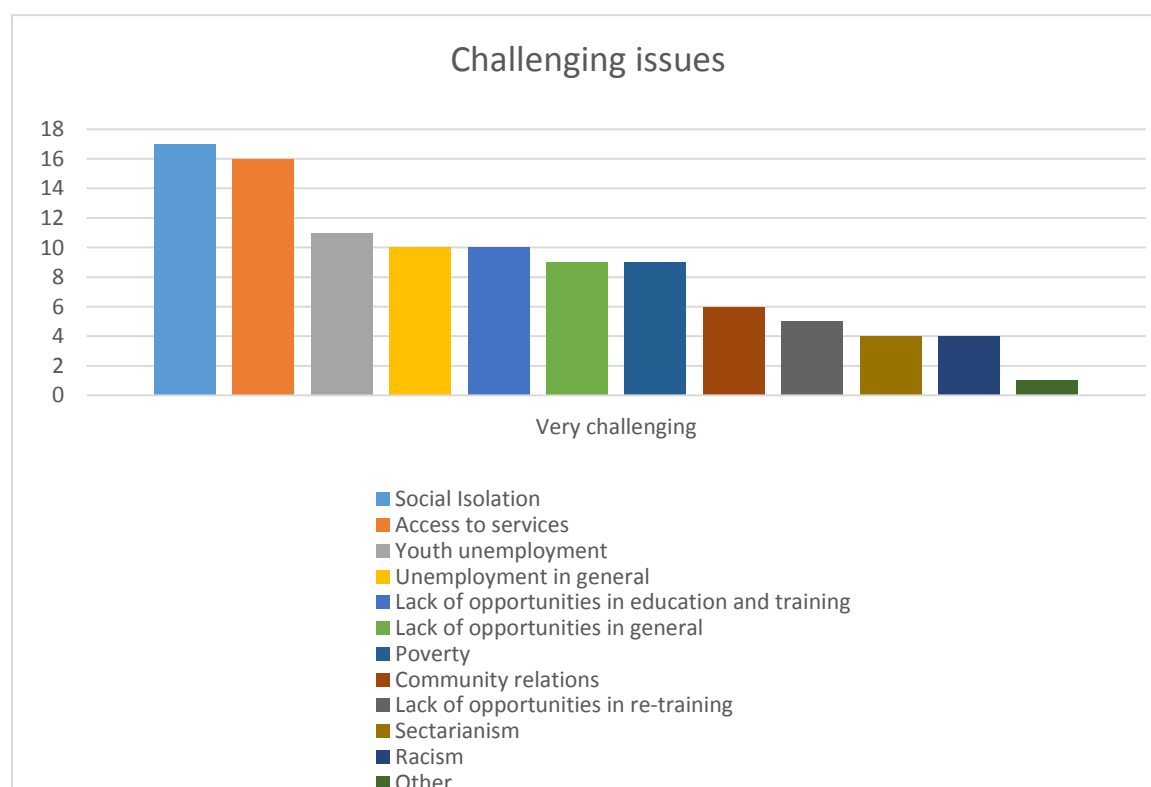
139

Challenging issues

Somewhat challenging

- Sectarianism
- Lack of opportunities in general
- Unemployment in general
- Poverty
- Lack of opportunities in re-training
- Social Isolation
- Youth unemployment
- Community relations
- Lack of opportunities education and training
- Access to services
- Racism

Challenging issues

Not at all

- Racism
- Community relations
- Sectarianism
- Access to services
- Unemployment in general
- Lack of opportunities in education and training
- Poverty
- Social Isolation
- Youth unemployment
- Lack of opportunities in general

140
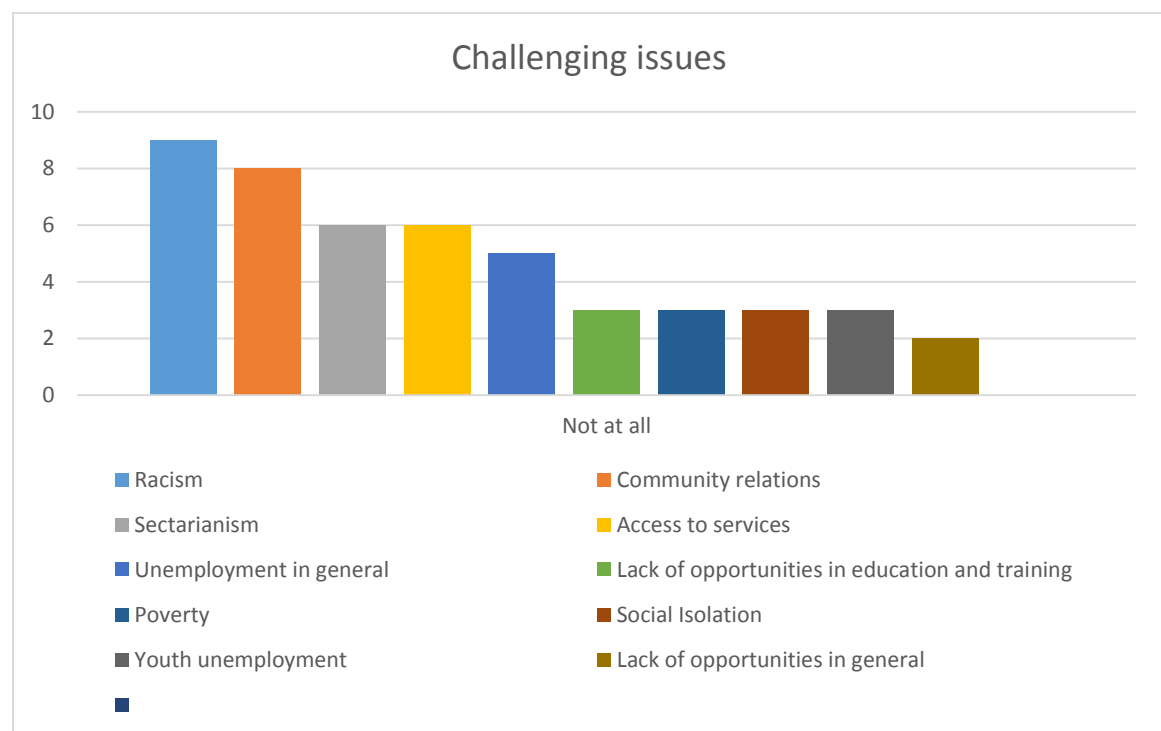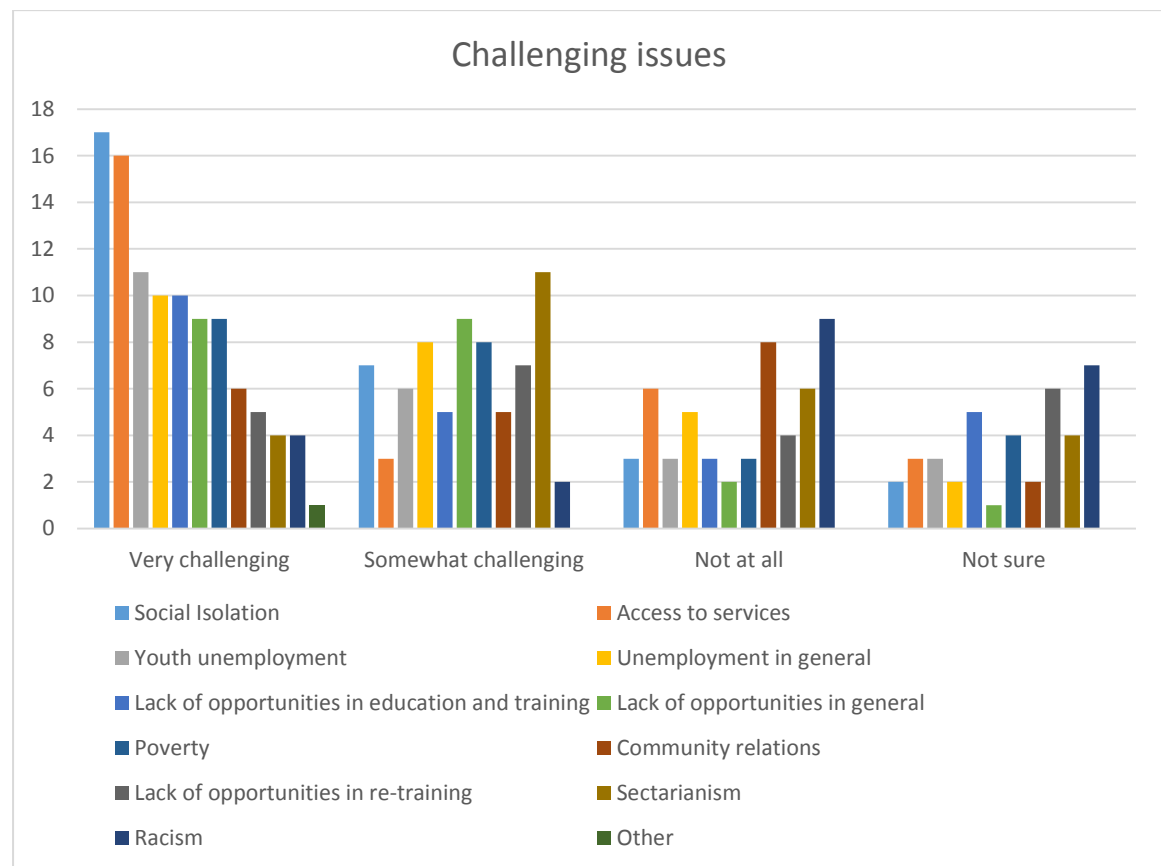
The tables above show that of those issues identified for consideration with regards the challenges they posed to participants, Social Isolation was considered the most challenging issue with access to services, youth unemployment, unemployment generally, lack of opportunities in education and training and a general lack of opportunities also identified as very challenging issues.

Sectarianism was considered somewhat challenging, and continuing from those issues identified as very challenging, lack of opportunity, unemployment and poverty were identified as somewhat challenging.

Racism was considered the least challenging of issues with many respondents considering it not a challenging issue at all.

Section 3: About you

Gender

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	6	19%
Female	26	78%
No response	1	3%
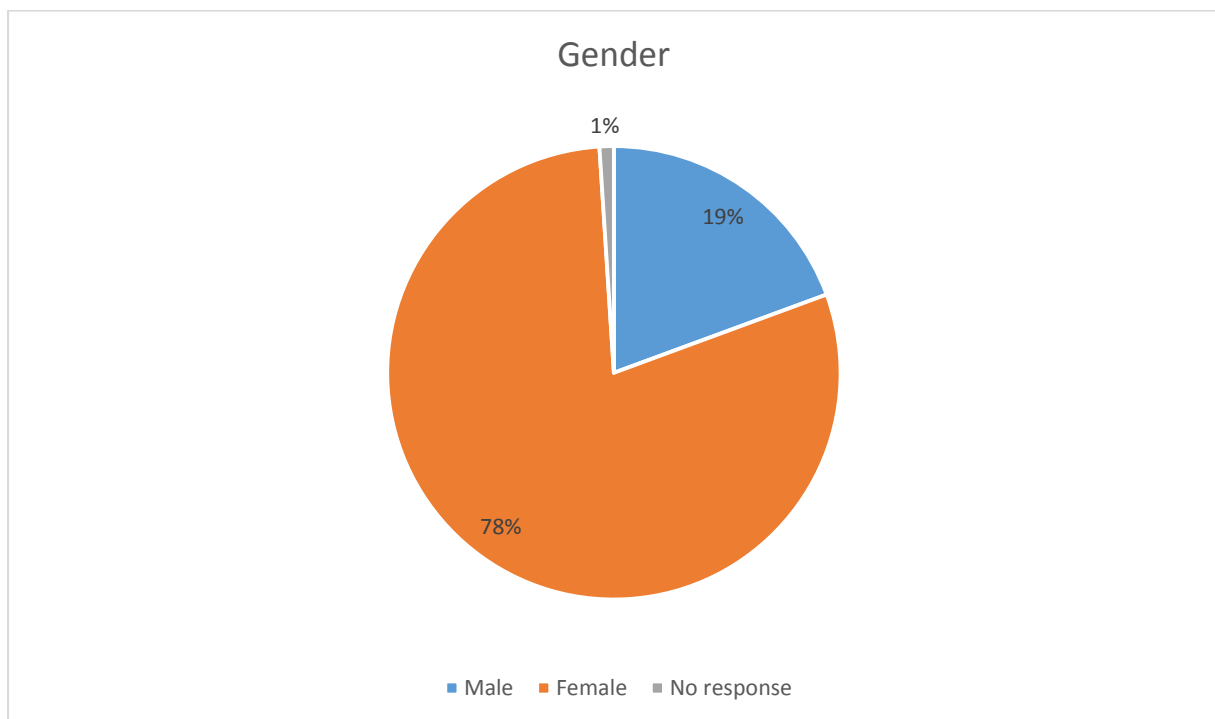
The respondents were overwhelmingly female as the tables above show,

Age

Age Range	Respondents	Percentage
>25	1	54%
26-64	4	40%
65+	2	6%

Age

Legend: 12 to 15 · 50 to 64 · 16 to 25 · 26 to 49 · 65 plus · 5 to 11
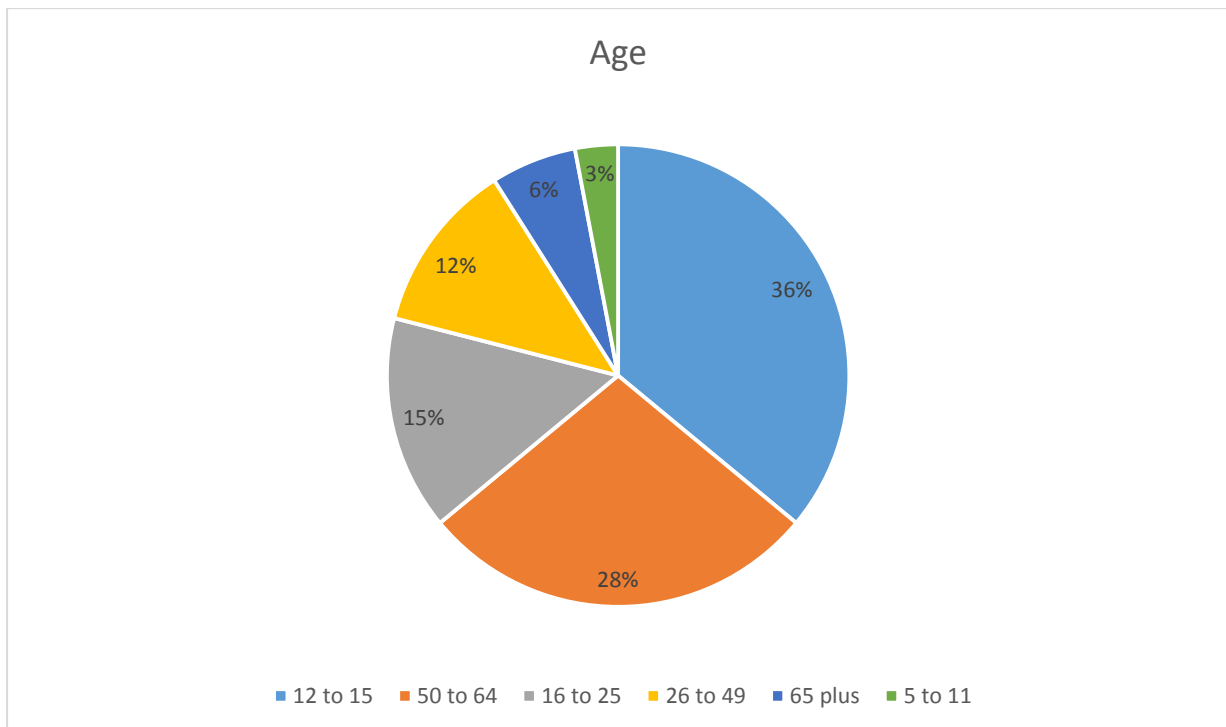
Proximity to Activities

Segment 10 – **Table 17.** Proximity to Activities

Less than 5 miles	64%
5 – 10 miles	24%
More than 10 miles	9%
No response	3%

Segment 10 – **Figure 19.** Proximity to Activities

Legend: Less than 5 miles · 5 – 10 miles · More than 10 miles · No response
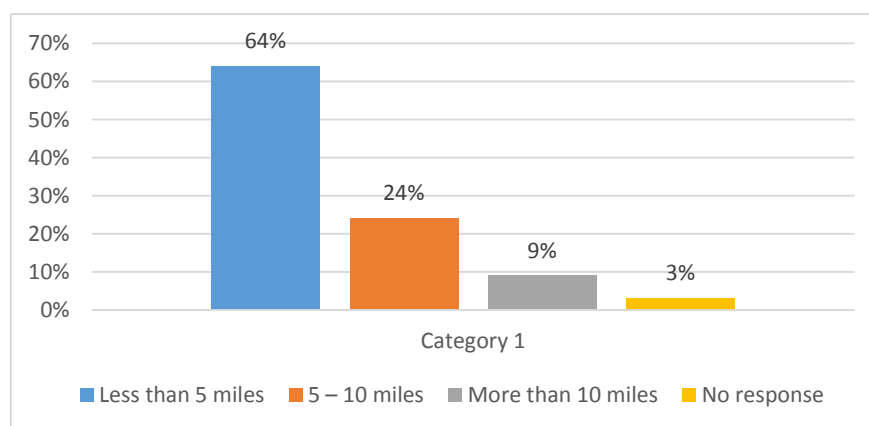
Most respondents lived relatively close to the community arts activities they took part in with 64 per cent living less than 5 miles away and 88 per cent living less than 10 miles away.

The vast majority travel by car to the venues which host the activities and traveling time for the vast majority is less than half an hour.

Just over half took part in cross community projects, while almost 25 per cent took part in intergenerational and the same again for multicultural projects.

Beyond the community arts projects already identified the respondents also took part on other activities, design, drama, ceramics, Zumba, gymnastics and playing in bands.

How do you usually get to the project you currently take part in?

Segment 10 – Table 18. Method of travel

Method of Travel	Percentage
On foot	9%
By car	85%
Get a lift with someone	6%
By bus	
By bike	
Other	

Segment 10 – Figure 20. Method of travel

144
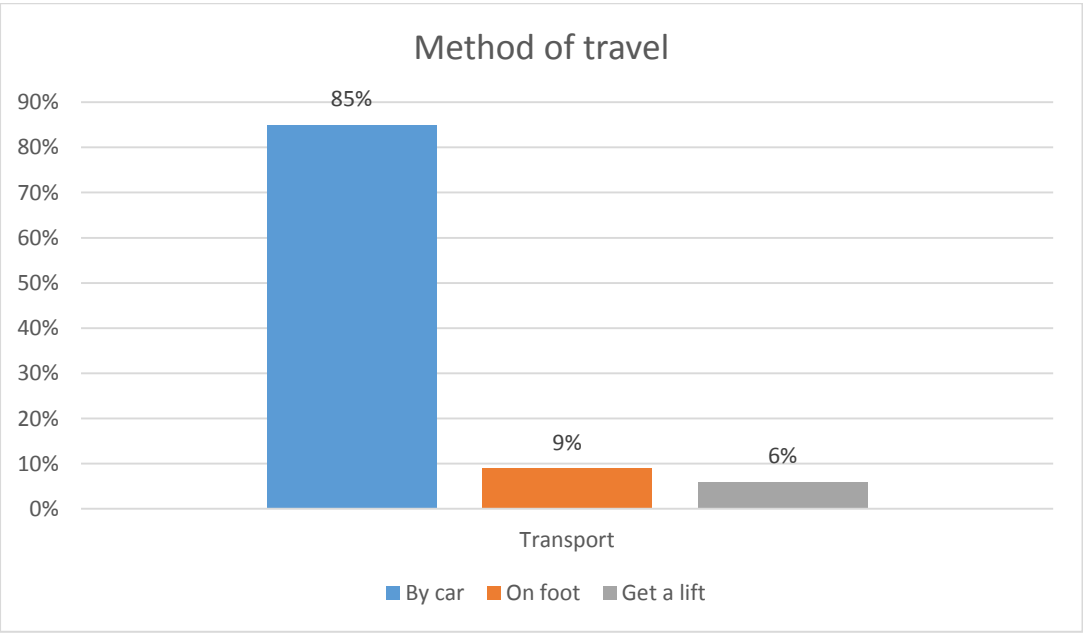
How long does it take you to get to where the activity takes place?

Time travelled	Percentage
Less than half an hour	88%
Between 30mins and 1 hour	6%
More than 1 hour	6%
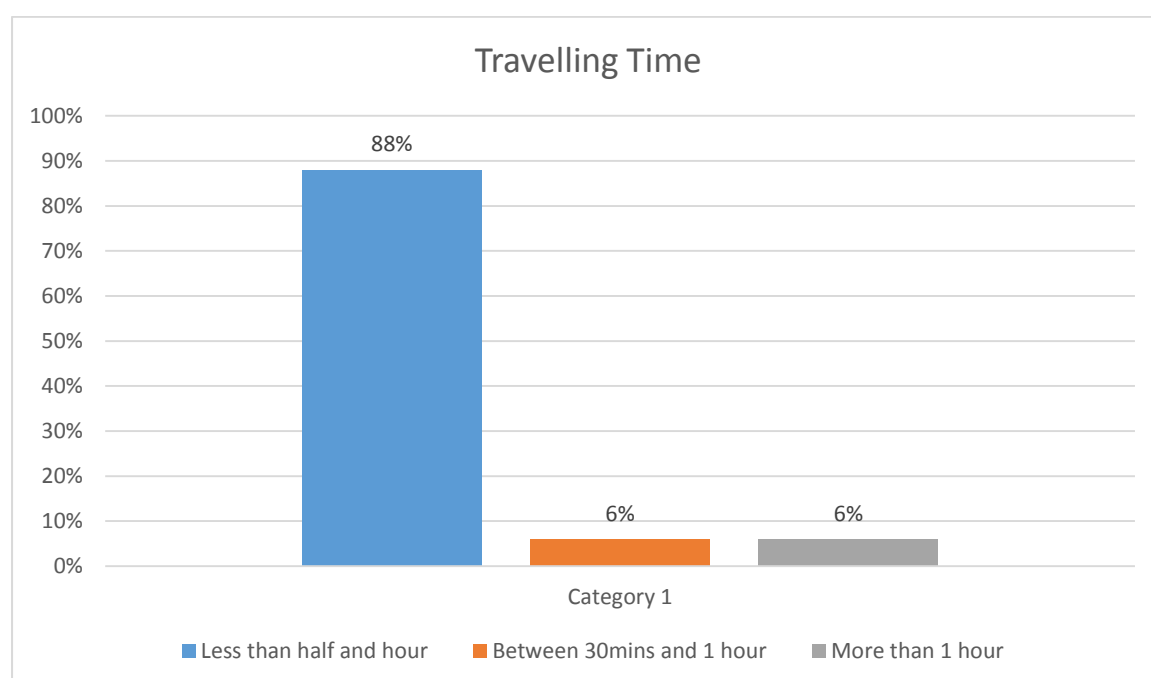
Have you ever taken part in any of the following?

Cross community arts projects	52%
Inter-generational community arts projects	24%
Multi-cultural community arts projects	24%

Participation in community arts projects

- Cross community arts projects
- Inter-generational community arts projects
- Multi-cultural community arts projects
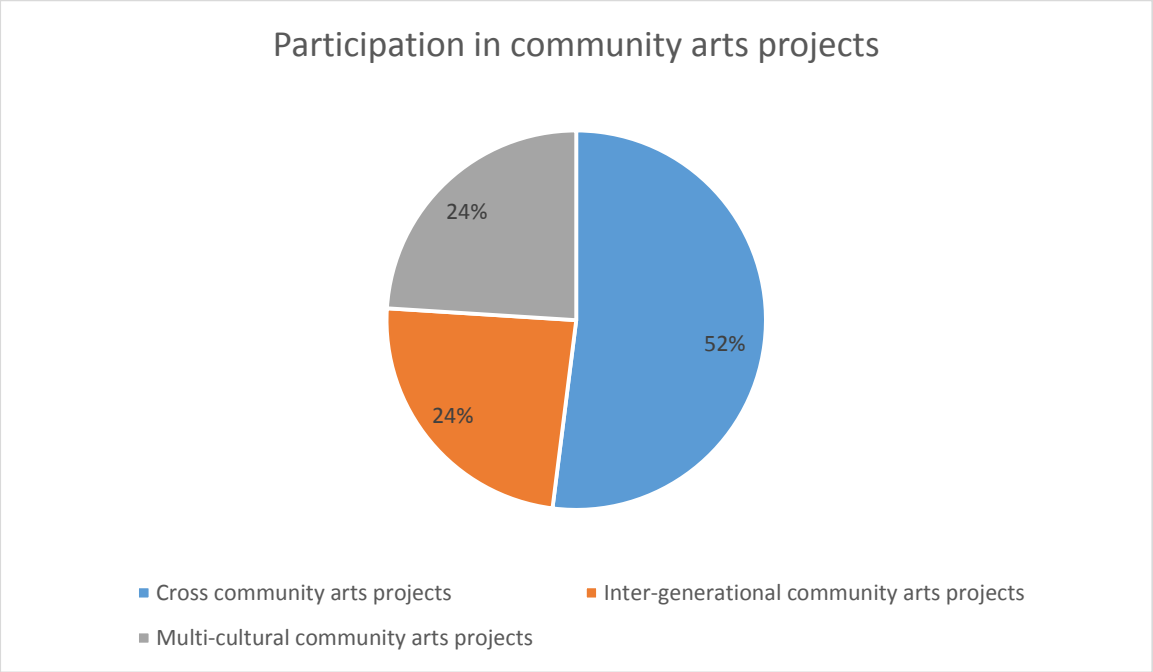
What other community arts activities and groups do you take part in on a regular basis?

Segment 10 – **Table 21.** Community arts activities

Activities
Design
Drama
Ceramics
Zumba / Dance
Dance / Gymnastics
Rock school

Section 4: Provision of Future Arts Activities

Segment 10 – Table 22. Provision of future arts activities

Take part in future activities	Percentage
Yes	83%
No	
No responses	27%

The participants were asked whether they would be interested in taking part in future activities to which 83 per cent responded positively to that suggestion.

The same 83 per cent also agreed that Community Arts could be used to address issues in rural communities and identified key issues which required attention in order to ensure that participation was accessible and enjoyable.

Better public transport, better quality arts equipment, having venues closer to where people live and having better trained facilitators were all factors which caught the attention of the respondents.

Do you think the arts can be used to address real issues in rural areas?

**Segment 10 – Table 23.** Thoughts about the arts addressing rural issues

Yes	83%
No	0
No response	17%

In your opinion, what would need to be improved to make your experience of community arts better?

Improving the experience of community arts

Issues	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Ranked 4	Ranked 5	Ranked 6
Better Public Transport to and from activities	17	1	2			
Having artists who know more to run activities	13	4	2			
Being involved with a project for a longer period of time	7	7	3			
Getting to know other people taking part before project begins	8	3	3	2		
Having activities closer to where I live	14		6		1	
Having activities provided for free	6	6	4	1		
Having better quality arts equipment for projects	15	2	2	2		
Having a better space for activities to take place in	8	4	3		2	1
Better access to high speed broadband	8		4	3		
Other						

Improving the experience of community arts
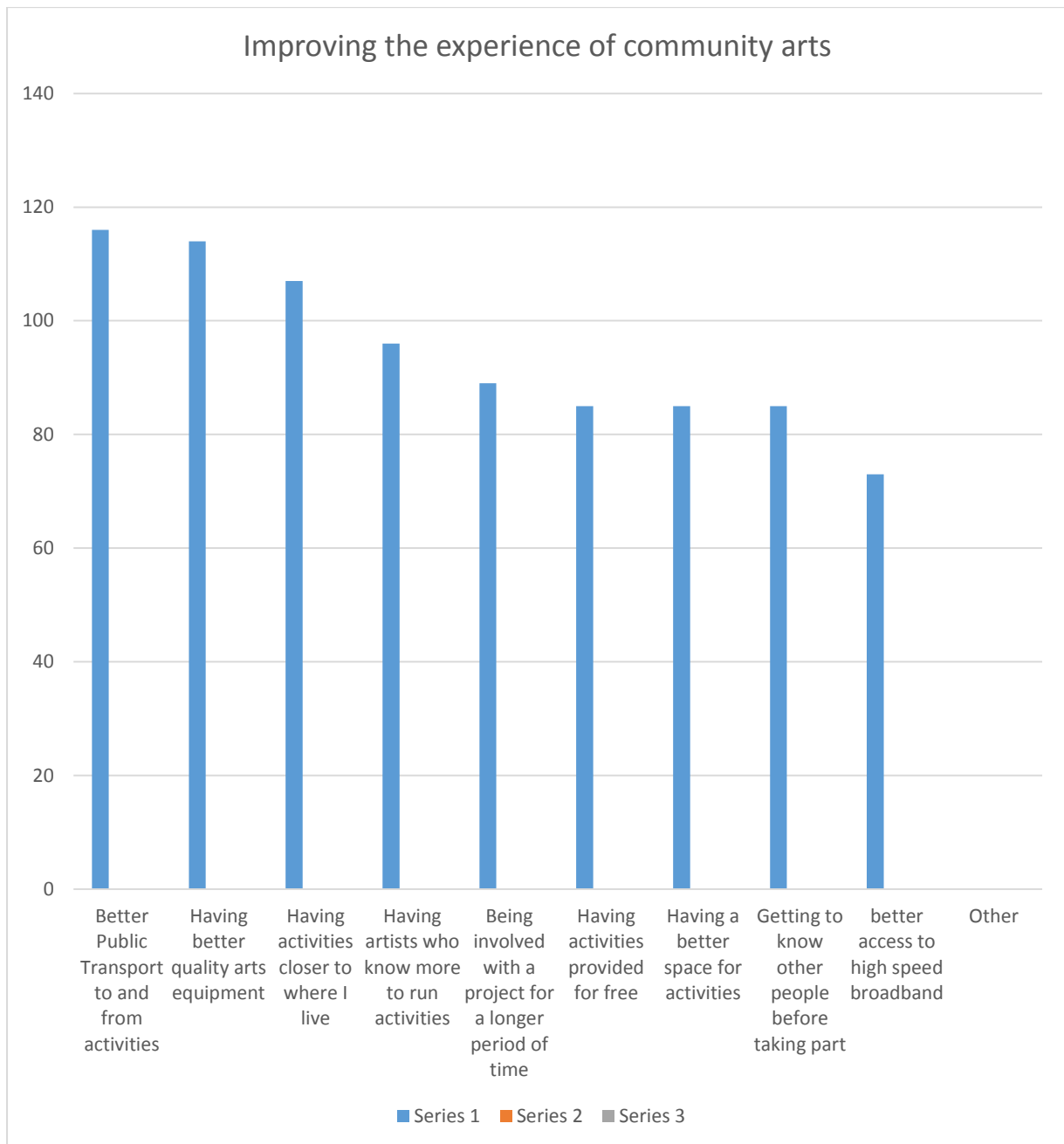
CHAPTER EIGHT

QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

CHAPTER 8: Qualitative Information

The information gathered from our survey research offered the following landscape for Arts provision generally and Community Arts in particular.

With regards organisations or groups which offer arts activities or community arts projects, there are small numbers of organisations with paid staff, a majority of organisations staffed by volunteers with little or no purpose built facilities and voluntary organisations which emerge to facilitate spaces for artists to network and share work. Some of these latter groups go on to constitute themselves and apply for funding and some endeavour to facilitate artistic activities in their communities.

There is evidence of a lack of trained arts facilitators, and little availability of trained community arts practitioners.

Despite those difficulties, organisations offering arts and community arts opportunities cater for a large demographic, the data pointed to a spread through all age groups although there was a slightly higher concentration of opportunity for people 50 years and above compared to a slightly smaller offering for pre-school age children.

Most organisations and groups have no limit in terms of their outreach and see themselves as open to all ages, all orientations, all religious persuasions and all ethnic backgrounds. Some organisations have specific cohorts or at least the groups end up as having specific memberships, men only activities, women only activities, groups dealing specifically with issues arising from the arrival of immigrants, but by and large the orientations or organisations and groups is wide ranging and unrestricted.

The Arts and Community Arts are used for exploring sensitive community issues, for improving health and well-being, in some cases for community development and capacity building, although it would appear there is little connection between community arts practice and preparing people for employment, something that community arts processes could easily lend themselves towards.

The range of arts activities on offer is substantial; dance, craft, traditional arts, photography, drama and theatre, music and film-making, animation, drumming, storytelling, pub theatre, building carnival floats, craft schemes, graffiti art, song writing, boat building, willow sculpture, bog wood workshops, cultural crafts, illustration, glass workshops, blacksmithing, environmental arts, and basketry.

This vast array of creative possibility relies heavily on funding or a DIY approach when funding couldn't be accessed or wasn't available.

Discussion

Three community forums were organised in Omagh, Enniskillen and Newry. Face to face meetings were held with a number of groups and individuals and where meetings were not possible phone conversations added to the information mix.

Each rural community forum had representation from arts organisations, organisations which worked specifically in the field of community arts, arts and community arts practitioners, statutory bodies and arts project participants. There was some participation from offices of elected representatives.

There were opinions voiced at the beginning of the forums which stated what the participants thought about the Arts,

> *"The Arts need to be a platform for change – a catalyst for change."*
>
> (Omagh participant)

> *"The Arts need to challenge perception in relation to society – challenge societal norms – when you participate in the Arts - you should challenge yourself."* (Omagh participant)

Other participants suggested that

> *"Where we work in our communities – we need to offer opportunity – we need what we deliver to be enjoyable and fun – it must be welcoming and inclusive."* (Newry participant)

> *"We need to open up opportunity for people to try things out."* (Omagh participant)

The definition of rural

In Enniskillen and Newry concerns were raised regarding the definition of Rural.

Exploring Change had set out from the beginning the definition which this project was working with, and was a definition as agreed by DARD, that of areas where were there were less than 4500 inhabitants.

> *"Some people say once you get past Toome everything else is rural"* (Enniskillen participant)

The Enniskillen and Newry Forums suggested that a numerical definition did not accurately reflect the constitution of rural communities; that approaching defining rural communities numerically did not take into account many other important factors and could potentially skew access to amongst other things funding.

> *"A lot of these definitions are really about funding, they're not about understanding what the differences are between the cities and the rest of us."* (Enniskillen participant)

It was suggested that there were tiers of rurality – rural areas, rural towns, rural villages and rural hamlets all of which had topographical differences impacting connectedness to the land, to mountain ranges and in some cases to water. There are cultural and social differences extending to localised customs and cultural attitudes, different religious permutations and differences in artistic heritage and history.

It was put forward that Northern Ireland's rural areas while constituting a significant section of the land mass of Northern Ireland, if a comparison was made between rural areas, or what was considered a rural area, in other countries, some areas in Northern Ireland would not be considered rural.

It was generally suggested that the larger towns which dominate the region would under the official definition not be categorised as rural.

> *"The definition of what is rural needs looked at. We live in hamlets, villages, areas with tiny populations – the big towns are not necessarily rural."* (Omagh participant)

It was proposed that defining rural might be better achieved by setting a list of objective criteria

- Access to services – water, electricity, sewerage
- Access to transport services
- Proximity to services – health, optical, dental, schools, higher education,
- Access to new communications – Internet/Broadband

> *"We need funding to be allocated more fairly – we're not all farmers – the rural community is split - 10 per cent farmers - 90 per cent rural dwellers – but funding is split 90% to farmers – perhaps DARD could have an arts council section and we could work with them for funding."*
> (Omagh participant)

For some artist participants the question of audiences was raised. In urban centres and in big towns there is an assumption that artists have audience reach or the potential to develop an audience. In rural areas this was not the case, often it is very difficult to cohere activities which will allow connection with an audience.

It was also suggested that the idea that everyone in Northern Ireland was close to an arts centre did not take into account a number of variables; access to transport, connectedness to the Arts and the kind of arts activities which take place in local arts centres, the cost of accessing events in arts centres or the cost of organising one's own events in an arts centre.

Community Development

Key points:

The key issues arising from discussions in Omagh were based around arts and community arts and the connection to community development.

There was some discussion about what comprised the key principles of community development, with participants suggesting participatory decision making processes, activities which increase the ability of participants to influence decision makers, equality of opportunity and opposition to discriminatory practices, encouraging community self-determination and the encouragement of partnership working were just some of the defining qualities of community development work.

Where organisations were involved using the arts for community development, this included developing a skills base for young people, generating a creative industries hub, skill sharing, working with people with disabilities or mental illness, working with young people to combat anti-social behaviour, criminality or paramilitarism.

> *"We work with young people – where there is no provision – nothing for them to do – so they turn to drink and drugs."* (Down participant)

> *"We worked in Newcastle and Newry with young people - a speight of suicides – we went in - we took 2 youth workers from Youth Action – we worked on a film project about youth suicide – the kids made a film about suicide prevention – that's a resource - we had good facilitators – self-esteem was improved – self-confidence was much improved."* (Newcastle participant)

> *"We work with kids with Down Syndrome, Autism – with people with mental health issues – the arts is useful to help people with particular problems – it isn't just about getting people in a room and dancing – that room becomes a community forum – a networking space for parents – a place where people can share their experiences – capacity is developed through that."* (Omagh

> *"We have an access progression route – some people take part in programmes for therapeutic reasons – some just for pleasure – but we also have a route towards the creative industries if that is what you want to do."* (Omagh participant)

Issues Community Arts addresses

Key points:

As per the information gathered through the questionnaires, the scope and scale of the arts practices used was substantial.

Organisations used issue based drama and theatre to address addiction, bullying, homophobia, sexism and domestic violence, impact of the conflict and good community relations.

> *"We use the arts to discuss marginal issues"* (Omagh participant)

Other organisations produced arts magazines with community participation, visual arts exhibitions addressing rural isolation, drumming workshops to address racism, music therapy for people at risk of suicide and self-harm, summer schools for young people aiming to facilitate cross community relations and some organisations specialised in the reviving of rural crafts and the reskilling process involved with that revival. Where organisations worked on the revival of rural crafts there was a suggestion that the reskilling process was used to inculcate the idea of rural pride which could then be harnessed for conflict transformation.

As with the quantitative information a small number of organisations and community groups had little or no direct community development aspirations however the value of the activities undertaken was more based in understanding either visual arts or the appreciation of arts and culture.

As participants in the discussions there were, representatives of writers groups which existed purely to facilitate feedback on written work, representatives of visual arts study groups which allowed dedicated time to the teaching of art history and organised visits to galleries, and groups which catered for singer songwriters functioning in much the same way as writers groups.

It was suggested that while this may not be perceived as direct community development work, it did allow a platform on which to develop a range of initiatives and groups like these operated on a cross community basis, on an intergenerational, inter-ethnic and non-gender specific basis. This would undoubtedly offer participants scope to become empowered, build confidence and develop capacity.

There was some contrasting of organisations which did not use the arts but did promote community development and could be said to use community development practices. It was suggested rural women's groups, faith based groups, sporting organisations operating in local communities, advice organisations and political constituency offices could be included as organisations involved in community development which might be persuaded to use arts activities particularly community arts practices.

There was also a growing recognition of the potential of working across racial, ethnic, sectarian and geographic boundaries through provision that had a broad and supportive focus.

The impact of Community Arts activities

Key points:

In discussions regarding the impact of community arts activities it was put forward that participants reported increased confidence and self-esteem, improved relationships within communities, raised consciousness, a reduction in feelings of isolation and the creation of a sense of belonging although it was suggested that participants found it difficult to articulate the scale of the personal and community benefits which they believed had been achieved.

> *"Talking to a social worker I know that the two hours we offer each week is of great benefit – the parents get rest, they know the kids are looked after, the kids develop their self-esteem, their mental health is improved, the parents see the kids are less demanding because they feel better about themselves."* (Down participant)

> People sometimes know what they want – but they have to be asked - we have done fashion, pottery, baking, dance classes – we're even writing a play now – I had no knowledge of fashion – couldn't work a sewing machine – but we were asked what our ideas were – we were offered material and it was up to us to do it – to create something. You could see our confidence grow, at the start people were saying "you won't get me doing that" then by March they were up on stage at the Strule Arts centre." (Omagh participant)

Why might Community Arts practices not be undertaken?

Key points:

The information arising from discussion regarding this issue very much mirrored the information offered through the questionnaires, lack of shared space, lack of purpose built facilities, lack of capacity regarding facilitators and lack of funding at appropriate levels of accessibility and affordability.

> *"We don't have a home – we don't have a permanent facility – it costs a fair price to hire the hall that we use."* (Newcastle participant)

With regards funding, all too often what was on offer from funding streams was support for short term projects which didn't allow enough time for initiatives to become fully developed.

Funding applications were not considered user friendly and there was a general lack of confidence regarding accessing available funding.

Beyond that, blame was often laid at what were considered conservative practices in rural areas, a lack of innovative thinking, a lack of desire to improve the knowledge base, relying on traditional ways of doing things rather than being forward thinking, lack of awareness of the importance or the benefits of the arts, lack of political support for the arts and lack of community support for the arts.

> *"We had real problems with council support – they can't even get our name right – which feels like they don't take our work seriously."* (Newcastle participant)

There were also problems with getting trained facilitators.

> *"There are few artists in our community who have the skills to work with the kind of groups we work with – we work with groups at risk"* (Down participant)

> *"We have lots of artists but put them in front of 15 young people with special requirements – that's a whole different skill set altogether."* (Down participant)

Challenges for groups with paid workers

Key points:

In the discussions, and in face to face interviews, a series of questions were asked which offered the opportunity to look at challenges which emerge for organisations implementing Arts and Community Arts activities.

With regards paid workers, organisations required full-time staff to administer projects rather than facilitate projects, or rather staff employed to deliver arts projects often ended up as administrators even if they have an arts background.

Facilitation of arts projects or arts activities is often carried out with freelance artists and arts practitioners.

"Core funding is a real problem – it is hard to be an attractive sector when all the jobs you offer last 6 months" (Omagh participant)

"Belfast is way ahead of us in terms of programming and skills – we have to balance programming with skilled artists with outputs and outcomes - it's not easy on small budgets." (Down participant)

The administrator could find that bringing in freelance artists could weaken the sense of community which is required to deliver successful projects. There was still a perception that "parachuting" people in rather than developing local capacity.

"This is always a challenge - sometimes we know that the people who are local – who may not be as well trained as others – but will do a better job than ringing someone in from the outside even if they are a good facilitator." (Omagh participant)

"Sometimes you need to have trust in our communities that we will know what will work in local communities." (Omagh participant)

"You need to build skills in your own communities – we don't need people with a degree – we need people with the skills to facilitate projects well." (Omagh participant)

"We need to share good practice – get a bus – load it up with artists from rural areas and take them to be shown good practice." (Omagh participant)

For groups and organisations with paid workers it was suggested that difficulties emerge with the amount of administration which is required to facilitate paid staff.

Full-time workers are often on short term contracts contingent on funding and accessing and maintaining funding requires time consuming administrative work. There are audits, targets, constant funding applications to fill in. The phrase "Admin over Arts" was used to describe the process.

If the full time staff member has been employed to deliver a project with a group or groups, the speed at which rural groups and organisations can be brought on board often eats in to the project delivery time.

Two approaches emerge, high impact short term work which delivers an output, but is weak on outcomes, or measured low impact work which delivers outcomes but has little in the way of outputs.

Group management is very difficult for paid staff, groups start up and become part of a project but participants drop away over time. Project delivery then becomes difficult and this impacts the next funding application with regards financing for staff.

Paid workers have to be flexible, have to multi task, have little back up support, experience burn out and often find that the time spent in administration "drags" them away from artistic practice both personally and professionally.

What was clear was that access to funding made a substantial difference,

> *"We have funding now - from the Arts Council – So now we can organise effectively – we have now year on year progression – if you only get annual funding you are really only working on projects for 6 months – the rest of the time you are working getting ready for the next funding round."* (Down participant)

What challenges are there for Arts and Community Arts groups and organisations run by or working with volunteers?

The quantitative information showed us that few groups had full-time or part-time staff, rather many of the groups were staffed with volunteers. This brings its own challenges. It is also important to factor in that there are different strands of volunteer activity.

Volunteer Arts groups

Key points:

In our sample group there were volunteer run arts organisations. Mostly these groups facilitated artistic activity.

The challenges for the volunteers in these groups were, finding suitable venues, communicating their existence to other like-minded creative people, organising the necessary administrative work that comes with the maintenance of the group.

The groups that participated in our discussions had reached a point where they would organise themselves sufficiently in order to apply for funding.

"We can't afford the time to do up minutes – to take notes – to fill in forms – we don't have the time" (Warrenpoint participant)

"We rely on volunteers – you cannot delegate effectively if you are relying on people with limited availability" (Omagh participant)

Finding volunteers for boards or committees was found to be very difficult. In rural areas, it was put forward, that locating "suitably qualified" people to create a functioning board when the arts were a long way down the list, competing with the GAA and rugby clubs for board members.

"For an organisation - it is hard to get a board – we don't have access to doctors, lawyers, accountants, - the GAA and Rugby soak them up." (Down participant)

Constituted Arts Groups

Once constituted, the groups then found that the application for funding or opportunities, the administration, evaluation and reporting on funding applications was time consuming, and was ultimately taking away from the time available for creative activities, the reason the group existed in the first place.

> *"One of the challenges when you get a constitution – you end up doing paperwork"* (Down participant)

Community organisations

Key points:

In terms of organisations which require volunteers to either help deliver community arts activities or aid in their delivery, finding volunteers is difficult. Finding volunteers with suitable experience is very difficult.

People who wish to volunteer are often young with little experience. Often young people volunteer to "pad out" their CV's, they volunteer for short periods and move on. Volunteers require training, supervision, they lack experience, confidence and competence.

> *"We need our volunteers – we have to work with them – train them – we engage with them – then we let them run events."* (Newcastle participant)

Volunteer availability can often lead to projects losing momentum when "trained" or "experienced" volunteers move on or when volunteer availability doesn't match project requirements.

> *"Relying on volunteers can create a lot of double handling – it means you have to offer training – paying some attention to skill development."* (Down participant)

Volunteering seems to exist in a "feast" or famine" timeline where organisations or groups will have periods where there are too many volunteers and other times where there are none available.

Organisations found the most efficient use of volunteers was to establish a "core group", who were given some "training", were "integrated" into projects to develop experience and who were in some way connected to the community they would be working in.

From the questions regarding challenges facing groups and organisations with paid workers or relying on volunteering, discussion centred on what is required to increase the capacity to use community arts practices.

There were three questions which emerged from the discussions which went beyond detailing of organisations and group activities, difficulties associated with project delivery or dealing with staff and volunteers and those were,

What evidence of good community arts projects could the participants offer?

How could Community Arts activities be sustained? and

How could the potential to use community arts practices be improved?

These questions were interlinked with ideas of developing capacity in rural areas, improving the skills base and using community arts as a vehicle to examine and reflect on "difficult" and "sensitive" issues arising from what we suggested earlier was a rural narrative describing stagnation and decline.

Evidence of good Community Arts Projects

Examples offered:

It is worth stating initially that prior to the discussion participants were informed about the working definition of Community Arts which is outlined earlier in this document. It would be reasonable to conclude that the following examples of Community Arts projects would fall on a spectrum between arts activities in local communities and Community Arts practice properly defined and delivered.

It was suggested that an exemplary project was **TRASH Fashion, a project delivered by Community Arts Partnership** in partnership with a group whose membership consisted of people from ethnic minority backgrounds and another group of people experiencing visual impairment.

Community Arts Partnership's TRASH Fashion participants

There was also praise for the **Poetry in Motion Community Project, another project delivered by Community Arts Partnership** which offers poetry workshops, development of writing skills and opportunities for new and emerging writers to be published. This programme is part of CAP's Literature and Verbal Arts provision. Attached to this programme is the Seamus Heaney Award for new writing.

Frank Ormsby, Marilyn McLaughlin from Derry/Londonderry (Winner of the Seamus Heaney Award for New Writing),Sharon Flynn from Dervock (First Runner Up), Conor Shields, CAP's CEO.

Glasgowbury, the organisation based in Draperstown, utilises music to develop entrepreneurial skills in young people, is realising a creative industries hub in the local area, uses music to develop confidence, increase capacity, and also looks to increase employability amongst young participants.

An Creggan has community outreach programmes, uses arts to address discrimination and organises community festivals celebrating the multicultural arts.

Down Community Arts has a series of programmes which employ community arts practices, the Impact programme using photography to aid in addressing poor mental health, programmes working with young people to develop skills in film-making and cross border projects using film to aid in the prevention of suicide.

New Horizons in Enniskillen works with people with issues emerging from poor mental health and addiction. They use arts activities for therapeutic reasons but participants suggested that the output is very impressive and has a professional feel about it.

Pettigo has a community organisation which employs long term artistic programmes for community intervention.

The Community Cinema in Newcastle offers affordable community cinema with a wide ranging programme to ameliorate lack of provision.

How could Community Arts activities be sustained?

Key points:

Many participants suggested that funding was necessary to increase the potential for sustaining Community Arts activities, programmes and practices.

To ensure that increased funding could be accessed, and from there accounted for, evaluated and monitored there would need to training programmes for administrators. Too often people in arts organisations, community arts organisations or volunteer arts groups struggled with funding applications and the procedures required to ensure that there was sufficient accountability.

There was a need for purpose built facilities, other than the large town based Arts centres which dominate rural arts provision. Many felt that some of these centres had a negative impact, because of affordability issues that put them beyond the reach of most community-based initiatives.

Other more policy-driven ideas put forward were that there needs to be more joined up thinking, more connected strategies between Assembly departments especially DARD and DCAL.

Community Arts organisations need to identify supportive political figures and parties and encourage them to be more vocal in their support for activities which could ultimately benefit them in terms of having more confident engaged citizens.

How could the potential to use community arts practices be improved?

Key points:

Education is required to firstly promote the arts and the idea that the arts are an essential part of life. There needs to be it a promotional campaign which allows the arts to be as highly thought of as sport in rural communities. Whilst there has been a general diminution

There needs to be promotion of the Arts and Community Arts in schools. Improved communications regarding what is available and what can be accessed by community groups looking to intervene using the Arts.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 9: Concluding remarks and recommendations

Understanding impact and equalising access

Whilst it can almost always be anticipated, especially in times of tightening public purses, that funding and the longevity of its availability would be a common demand, there are a range of very interesting, inventive and hitherto, not widely recognised observations and suggestions that emerged from this research. Some lie in the macro-political/economic world of policy and public subvention, some in the organisation of resources and others in the niche complexities that best practice in community arts demands, where issues around processes, promoting authorship through participation, adopting creative interventions for a range of stubborn issues like poverty and sectarianism and understanding how impactful the arts can be. The research chimes with a more general desire for understanding impact not as a reductive set of measurable outputs, but within a more nuanced framework of outcomes that describes better how communities see themselves and indeed, wish to see themselves in the future.

If we look at the first area, both RCN and CAP have an instinctive understanding of the sheer weight of obstacles that beset rural communities in their attempts to gain and retain adequate capacity and resources to implement real progressive change. Whilst there are specific deficits in policy formation and implementation for rural communities, the role and provision of community arts illustrates, if you will, some of the ideas that might exemplify a set of solutions more generally. If we set aside the constant cry for more funding, what should be recognised here is that while that is also demanded, it is the adequate targeted resourcing of provision that is a more enabling demand. Here we see local participants, suggesting that there be specific rural voices in agencies, committees, fund distributors etc and that the voices of those in the arts in rural areas are also included in policy and resource conversations and allocations.

This, whilst it may chime with the CAL committee at Stormont (see appendix 1) recommendation of so-called 'rural proofing', also shows just how central to local, everyday rural lives the arts are and that in order to promote their benefits, positioning decision making in spheres of particular rural influence is an undoubted recommendation that would carry considerable support and create lasting impact.

The idea of "rural-proofing" leaves more to the imagination than it does to actual policy or indeed, government supported outcomes. There lies an unfortunate and persistent paradox within rural proofing, where in effect some feel that many aspects of power and agency are systematically kept distant from rural communities and that this being the case, such levers to affect more positive

outcomes for rural areas may well be already "rural-proof". Whilst many within our research call for more locally-accessible resources, both in experience and material support, this is not localism per se, but a desire for greater accountability regarding equality of access to arts support.

If we look at the counter reading, if policy, especially arts policy in this instance, is to be truly "rural-proof", in a more positive formation, what does that require? Respondents here have offered ideas around the development of specific agencies for rural community arts (some of which do exist) or committee arrangements in the Department of Regional Development or perhaps in the nascent departments of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and of Infrastructure. It is also interesting that platforms to affect policy and resourcing decisions locally had been envisaged in the community planning processes that RPA and the redevelopment of local council structures also had in frame.

As Nelson McCausland noted in his introduction to the CAL inquiry into inclusion in the arts of working-class communities : *Where there are complex sets of barriers to inclusion, the Committee believes that it is important that the issue is considered and that rural proofing takes place to provide greater opportunities for inclusion in arts and culture activities in rural areas[164].*

These powers, with an increasingly important remit, based on the Assembly determination to support a more outcomes-referenced framework for government and council business planning, would sit very easily in the language and know-how of community arts organisations, practitioners and participants and also colleagues in rural development initiatives as well; "where a different approach is needed and …[which] focuses on the impact on our people rather than the actions we take within Government"[165] There may also clear potential intersections with the Carnegie Trust's recent development of happiness and wellbeing matrices to support baseline research. Within the positivist tradition of art making, the assertion that art creates true and lasting benefit, is not just notionally acknowledged here, but respondents actually identified and recorded the impacts.

Seeing potential

In all the feedback both here and elsewhere, it is clear that engaging in this creative activity at local level supports a great range of outcomes that both community associations, development agencies, arts organisations and local community groups all wish to see for their client populations and indeed for their wider community – So, by looking to outcomes and supporting actions, there is an undoubted opportunity for local rural groupings and their representative advocates, to use the learning here as a platform to affect some change given this new governmental direction. Community planning and

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[164] [NIA 298/11–16];
[165] Draft PfG 16-21

placing the arts and community arts within locally agreed community plans, will not only begin the process of offering active creative agency to local groups, but will also determine better usage of facilities already in place and indeed, chart a better path toward developing greater capacity. By using the community planning process as a creative consultative platform and using active research methods, mutually beneficial outcomes-based work plans, identifying funding and other resources, can be realised. Indeed, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Challenge Fund will allow for precisely that outcome, where councils beyond Derry/Londonderry and Belfast can make application for support, directly referencing their community plans and the community arts processes at the heart of their planning.

Supporting initiative

The resourcing of our rural communities, our townlands, villages and small towns with accessible, excellent and vital arts programmes, events, activities and opportunities is crucial to delivering a social change that strengthens a range of very people-centred outcomes in the first instance, where the secondary and tertiary benefits, the double and treble bottom line if you will, can be felt more deeply in the health and wellbeing of all who participate in the local economy and are stakeholders in the local community.

The CAL committee in its preliminary findings from the Inquiry into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities[166] recognised that longevity of funds, to support outreach initiatives for local communities was a key request for development. In looking at the responses here, talk of specific audience development initiatives in Belfast that could be rolled out in rural areas may be somewhat premature and more root and branch re-formation of arts provision, infrastructure and delivery is referenced here and obviously required before then.

It is also clear that whilst there has been the huge capital investment in infrastructure over the last two decades, with the memory of phrases like "an arts centre within 20 miles of everyone" still echoing– it appears that attendance, access and a sense of ownership has not been embedded, for a range of complex reasons. There are continuing calls for more capital investment, in more appropriately sized, and more affordable spaces but of course affordability brings us back to the constant pressures on funding and the contingent demand for more resources. Perhaps, there is a means of looking at these issues 'in the round' so as to re-invigorate local access to and ownership of a range of established spaces across rural Northern Ireland, by seeking new models of operation. Recognising that although multi-use spaces in church halls, GAA clubs, Orange halls, schools etc, often

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[166] NIA 298/11-16 Mandate 11-16, Feb, 2016

provide adequate "make-do" arrangements and continue to support participation, their principal operation is not arts-focused. New aspirations could be wedded to current council and Assembly determinations around community planning and more socially-responsive outcomes frameworks for disadvantaged communities already referenced, building capacity and augmenting current physical provision of facilities.

Identifying needs and resources

Which brings us back to the definitions or lack of around what it is to live and thrive in a so-called rural area. For many outside our main cities and large towns, who have a relatively comfortable life-style, with access to a range of metropolitan services in the many small towns with a range of arts and commercial offerings, the arts might be commensurately accessible. But once further disadvantage is added in, with obstacles like poor access to transport, low paid work or economic inactivity, disability, social isolation, poor communications infrastructure (especially around broadband access), not to mention cultural division, one starts to understand that offering an equal and supportive level of community arts provision is all the more necessary. If one identifies the pattern, that in effect shows everywhere beyond Belfast and Derry/Londonderry identified as rural, then one begins to see the scale of the populations, the variety of their circumstances and the range of challenges. If we use more finite models of definition, based on urban-centric notions of concentration of poverty or proximity to services, we immediately start to exclude further some populations that already feel quite marginal, because they fall within an area, like a small village, that may have a relatively higher access to a range of services than a neighbouring area, experiencing something very different. In so doing, these imposed boundaries can operate like a lottery, immediately creating winners and losers.

This research has pointed out that both the provided and possible provision of community arts for a great number of populations living in small towns and villages, whilst slightly better, is relatively still very limited. That determining to enhance local capacity and access to community arts in particular requires a new cohort of locally-based artists to be developed and recognised so that arts provision can more ably foster greater creative opportunities and increase local provision – rather than the reliance on overstretched arts organisations from Derry or Belfast. The passing on of skills and creative dialogue between practitioner and participant is a fundamental element of community arts practice.

The centrality therefore not only of the arts, but the artist is also a key area of development. Identifying, recognising and supporting new and established artists must be regarded as a priority area.

This research points to a real need for an extended, uniquely focused rural training programme, to transfer and embed learning and processes across a range of issues. This research also pinpoints some of the areas that should be addressed in any such rural community arts initiative. It is something that both CAP and RCN would be eager to take forward, across areas of advocacy, skills development, creative engagement and cultural and artistic competence.

Furthermore, if we understand this policy context better, we need to recognise that no matter how well-meaning the efforts of metropolitan-based community arts and just plain arts organisations to reach out to rural communities, they have neither the resource nor depth of knowledge in many cases, to satisfactorily offer more than the oft-quoted "parachuting-in", echoed in this report. Mainstreaming arts services and embedding true community arts processes, that are long-term, accessible (physically through transport, venue, practice and affordability considerations) and supportive of deeper layers of capacity-building beyond just artistic skills alone, will go some way to see rural communities given an adequate opportunity to succeed.

Advocating change

In so doing, supporting voices in positions of advocacy and simultaneously targeting resources in this more localised way, the key outcome of community planning processes across the region could be creatively enhanced and markedly more responsive to apparent need. This would go some way to advancing a "rural-proof" attitude to policy-making and resource management, not only for the arts alone, but across all citizen-facing areas of engagement.

Whatever mechanisms adopted, it is immediately apparent that whilst there stubbornly remains a range of deficits facing community and locally-based arts practice in Northern Ireland, there is equally a range of simple, effective, appropriate and affordable solutions at hand to promote and resource dedicated community arts capacity building programmes across a range of areas and governmental remits:

- Skills training for activists and participants
- Artist skills and management development
- Advocacy training
- Local council-facing forums & networks related to the arts
- Rural quotas for re-balancing provision

Only the determination to methodically prioritise the transformative power of the arts for rural communities and residents is required. Through a fully-costed and resourced integrated rural arts

strategy, incorporating our findings, rural access to dedicated arts provision would see fundamental improvement. That determination will undoubtedly unlock a huge wealth of potential for a very great many people living and working in challenging circumstances and times and in turn, enable a truer, deeper reflection of the potential of any creative economy in rural Northern Ireland.

Key Priority Ideas emerging from Responses

- Increased Resources
- Development of long term Funding Streams
- Development of Long Term Projects
- Creation of Rural Community Arts Forum
- Creation of Rural Community Arts Network
- Creation of an Arts Council section in new Department for Rural Affairs/Infrastructure
- Training programme in Community Arts theory and practice
- Develop Community Arts Projects for Rural areas
- Development of purpose built facilities
- Training for artists in rural issues
- Training for rural artists in facilitation skills
- Training for rural artists in working with "at risk" participants
- Programme to improve availability of arts equipment
- Higher pay for Community Artists
- Public Transport more appropriate, less car dependency

EXPLORING CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Recommendations from CAL Committee Inquiry:

Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities

1. In order to democratise the arts and culture and create the widest possible inclusion, the Committee strongly recommends that an Executive Arts and Culture Strategy is brought forward that is owned, supported, facilitated, and resourced by all the Executive Departments. This Strategy should be innovative and should be cognisant of existing arts and culture strategies across departments, avoiding any duplication of effort or resources. The Strategy should operate in a similar way to the Programme for Government, with co-ordinated targets, key performance indicators, and a monitoring and review process.

2. The Committee strongly recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy is thoroughly 'rural-proofed' and adequately resourced to ensure that disadvantaged rural communities are able to access and participate in arts and cultural activities and events on the same basis as their urban peers. This will also help to redress the current imbalance.

3. While individuals and groups with disabilities and/or special needs were not the key focus of this inquiry's terms of reference, the Committee strongly recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy is thoroughly 'proofed' and adequately resourced with these individuals and groups in mind.

4. The Committee further recommends that this Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy should seek to creatively bring publicly owned art to public buildings and spaces to allow all communities to enjoy and be inspired by locally relevant art. Particular focus should be given to using our schools and libraries as exhibition spaces and arts and culture hubs, and creating partnerships between museums, schools and libraries to bring the arts and culture to young people in disadvantaged communities.

5. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy creates specific partnerships with the theatres and theatre companies to facilitate them working with disadvantaged communities. Any Memoranda of Understanding between the Executive and these bodies should set out clearly what is expected of them, with targets and a monitoring regime. Partnerships should also be appropriately resourced.

6. The Committee recommends that the Executive Arts and Culture Strategy has a specific strand which examines and seeks to address the particular difficulties that face disadvantaged rural communities when trying to access the arts and cultural activities.

7. The Committee recommends that the Department and the Arts Council examine options for ensuring that community groups in disadvantaged areas are consulted on the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy; and that this consultation continues with respect to the delivery and continued evolution of the Strategy. This consultation should include groups from all over Northern Ireland and there should be a balance between rural and urban participants.

8. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy examines how best the 'Test Drive the Arts' scheme can be developed further to widen access to the arts to disadvantaged communities, particularly with regard to those in rural areas . It would also be worth the Strategy exploring the idea of 'social clauses' for publicly funded performance venues; however, resources would have to be provided through the Strategy to support this.

9. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy should tackle the issue of providing access to a range of musical genres for disadvantaged communities. To facilitate young people and musical groups/bands in disadvantaged communities, the Strategy should also look at how the provision of costly equipment, such as musical instruments, might be facilitated.

10. The Committee recommends that a transportation strand is developed as part of the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy to ensure access for disadvantaged communities, and also young people and rural communities. Consideration should be given as to how existing public service transport provision might be utilised.

11. The Committee strongly recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy is underpinned by access to arts and cultural activities and events through the school curriculum at all Key Stages. Education has a key role to play in the Strategy and this role should be supported by the development of Memoranda of Understanding with key pillars of our arts and culture infrastructure, such as libraries, museums, music, bodies, public service broadcasting, the publicly funded theatres and others. The substance for these Memoranda must be properly resourced to the benefit of all young people, but particular focus should be on young people in working class communities.

12. The Committee further recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy develops clear pathways into arts and culture-focused careers through the expansion of existing apprenticeships and the creation of new ones. Additionally, the Strategy should examine creative ways to use digital technology, gaming etc., and existing bodies which promote the application of technology, as well as existing activity in the creative industries here to further develop employment in the sector.

13. The Committee strongly recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy considers the issue of the short length of cycles for funding and other criteria around the awarding of grants that makes the development of project legacy difficult. The Committee suggests that the Strategy examines the use of tiered funding periods which take account of the levels of deprivation in the target community and the need for legacy work. Additionally, the Strategy should build on work already being undertaken to build capacity in community-based groups applying for funding, particularly groups based in disadvantaged communities.

14. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy supports the development of funding and 'in-kind' relationships between business and arts and culture organisations, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. Consideration must be given as to how Invest NI might encourage participation in these relationships when providing Foreign Direct Investment and other grants to their clients. Consideration should also be given to the creation of a specific central and local government fund for the promotion of participation in the arts and culture by disadvantaged communities. This fund would target groups in disadvantaged communities using specific, relevant funding criteria and minimal application paperwork.

15. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy seeks to develop better data gathering around participation in arts and cultural activities so that information about these can be better targeted at new audiences, particularly those in disadvantaged communities. Consideration must be given to undertaking this in partnership with local councils.

16. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy supports the development of an online arts and culture platform where funding partners can find each other. To be effective and have a full reach across Northern Ireland this platform must be developed in conjunction with local councils.

17. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy establishes a digital platform that promotes participation in arts and cultural activities and events across central and local government and the private sector. Such a platform requires considerable promotion and should be cognisant of lessons provided by similar platforms. Such a platform would provide the added benefit of being a one-stop-shop for tourists seeking such activities and events. The ability to access arts and cultural activities, performances and events via such a platform is more likely to encourage participation by disadvantaged, hard-to-reach, and other less traditional arts audiences.

18. The Committee recommends that the Executive's Arts and Cultural Strategy seeks to support and resource theatres and arts centres to develop outreach and access projects within their local communities. This should be undertaken in conjunction with local councils with the aim of encompassing all publicly funded arts and cultural venues. The development of relationships between these arts and culture hubs and their local communities to create familiarity and overcome barriers which inhibit participation. A second element of this must be support to facilitate performances and exhibitions from local communities in the venues. This would have the effect of giving local people a feeling of 'ownership' of the venues, so minimizing the intimidation factor. A further element of this should be the consideration of the possible location and delivery of venues for community culture and arts usage.

19. The Committee recommends that there is a volunteering strand for disadvantaged communities in the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy. This will allow the development of capacity and employability skills in disadvantaged communities and also have the added benefit of increasing disadvantaged communities' exposure to arts and cultural activities in their own communities.

20. The Committee strongly recommends that the Executive's Arts and Culture Strategy should be underpinned by a strategic partnership with local councils. This will facilitate a more joined-up approach, activities and resourcing with respect to the arts. Consideration should be given to the Executive entering into Memoranda of Understanding with each of the local councils, which would include targets and responsibilities, to ensure tangible delivery on these strategic partnerships and will feed into the councils' community plans.

21. The Committee recommends that the Executive re-examines the processes for recruiting and appointing members to the boards of public bodies. The Committee believes that the current processes limit the likelihood of representation from disadvantaged communities on these boards;

and, as a consequence, the voices of these communities are often not heard in the development of public policy.

22. The Committee recommends that the Department/Executive undertakes research into the development of Service Level Agreements between government and local arts providers to integrate arts into service provision for marginalised people, particularly the young. This would place the arts on the same footing as health, education, and social statutory providers.

EXPLORING CHANGE

APPENDIX 2

Community Arts Partnership

Response to the Consultation Document

Strategy for Culture & Arts 2016-2026

DCAL November 2015

January 2016

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

After what has been a couple of years of real torment for the arts community, many of us relished the opportunity to assist in the development of a 10 year strategy that would place the arts right at the centre of the conversation within our civic society. It was also a timely opportunity because we know that next year the department for culture, arts and leisure (DCAL) will be rolled into the super government department for communities (DC). So it is doubly significant to see a strategy that could determine the arts support structures at the heart of government that would then translate to the resourcing and platforming of the arts within wider society. Indeed it is triply significant, because the first national cultural policy (Culture 2025) is being developed in the Republic of Ireland. These parallel processes, defining how the respective ministries nurture and steward the arts for the next 10 years on the island, must chart new territory for creativity and navigate hugely significant commemorations for this island and all who live on it and who visit us.

In January 2015, a Ministerial Arts Advisory Forum (MAAF) was set up under the Chairmanship of Mr Bob Collins, Chairman of the Arts Council. That Forum included representatives of a selection of arts and culture organisations that broadly reflected a range of genres including children and young people, people with a disability, venues, community arts programmes and festivals. Following a number of meetings, the Forum developed a set of draft proposals, ideas and suggested themes to inform the 10 year arts and culture strategy and the proposed consultation document that would be required to gather opinions and views. It was intended by the Forum that the ideas and proposals would form part of a process of ongoing consultation with the Department which in turn would provide a draft consultation document which would have the full endorsement of the Forum.

Given the presumed pressures of time in June 2015 the Forum developed some outline ideas and has itself offered commentary to the consultation document from DCAL.

The following document is an attempt to amplify some of the thinking developed through the Forum discussion process, various other conversations and indeed focus group meetings facilitated by Community Arts Partnership, allowing for particular reference to the mission, vision and values of community arts practitioners and organisations, and offer comment and response to the consultation paper.

Section 2: Our Ambition for the Arts

Article 27 UN Declaration of Human Rights.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

The Irresistible Impact of the Arts

Everybody has a cultural life and makes cultural choices. There is not a single person in Northern Ireland who has not been moved by music, charmed by a child's spontaneous dancing, proud of the first drawing of a grandchild, entertained by a stage presentation, captured by a book, enthralled by a film or who has simply enjoyed experimenting with her own creative potential. The arts do engage thousands of people across a range of backgrounds and cultures, but of course there are still opportunities to enhance that ability and challenges to its reach.

People's lives are transformed by their introduction to and engagement in the arts. New ways of being and perceiving are realised. Communities of interest and place, culture and ethnicity are enriched. Community Arts, whilst consistently supporting the marginalised through a range of socio-economic circumstance, do not exclusively view a deficit model of artistic response as the only modus operandi of activity. Far from it, the transmission of the richness, depth and excellence of all aspects of creativity and art-making, via all who champion, practice and advocate for the arts, promotes participation in all our community settings, across centres of learning, health settings, etc.

The arts are a major contributor to employment in NI, with almost 6,000 jobs and over 9,000 volunteers. Supporting and crucial to the development of the creative industries, the arts are a key component of our creative economy, employing over 50,000 people. In all our schools and academic institutions, the promise of exciting new creative careers should not be solely the stuff of dreams but should be understood as the next stage in our educational and economic progress.

Our arts and culture help celebrate our shared, disparate and contested identity, and they are our most accessible means of exploring, understanding and transforming our local cultural dialogue. In creating attractive, welcoming and inclusive cultural celebration, the Arts are recognised as a draw for visitors, local, national and international.

Arts bring people together. We celebrate who we are; what we can contribute, what we enjoy, what entertains, and what enables our shared celebration of people and place. The arts reflect our cultural selves and the local offering of carnivals, theatre, public art, street art and galleries, books, comics, films, workshops and masterclasses, community plays and fashion design shows, poetry slams, concertos and gigs and a myriad of other events and happenings, highlight the best of our achievements and point to the depth of our collective potential.

Locally, the arts may not always have resisted the narrative of an elite, class-based system, preserving access for a privileged few, but for more 20 years, N Ireland has gone a long way to opening up access and participation for all sections of our society. The next 10 years are crucial in maintaining and enhancing that shared platform for all artistic exploration and creative engagement, so that the world can see a modern, progressive, outward-looking, international, confident, healthy, vibrant, creative, determined and talented people putting their creative needs at the centre of their own lives and encouraging Northern Ireland to take its place on any international stage and shine.

Looking forward

This will be the first Inter-Departmental Arts and Culture Strategy developed in more than 10 years building upon the foundations of the last strategy. However, it should be noted that successive strategies have been undertaken: a long list of reports stretching back to the mid-90s including *The Arts And Northern Ireland Economy, John Myerscough Northern Ireland Economic Research 1996, Multimedia Ireland Call Realising The Potential By Forbairt 1998*, *Opening Up The Arts The Strategic Review Of The Arts Council By Anthony Everett In 2000* , and of course *Unlocking Creativity From* in 2000 which heralded the first major policy development of the then newly established *Department For Culture Arts And Leisure.*

Any new 10 year strategy must look forward, trying to imagine what Northern Ireland and our society might be like. We should remember that today's population of children and young people includes all the writers, painters, playwrights, poets, composers, musicians, architects, town planners, digital creators, song-writers, film makers who will shape Northern Ireland and our understanding of it in the next 30-40 years and who will have an impact on the following fifty years. As technological development races to explore new digital horizons, our creativity must keep pace. Growing and harnessing the wealth of local creative expertise to maximize the potential for everyone will be key. That has challenge and potential. It must be explored, exploited and developed.

What our society might be like in 10 years is hard to imagine. We would like to see a place where;

- Everyone enjoys the fundamental right of access to the fullest range of creative opportunities.

- Participation is promoted across all settings and circumstances, formal and informal.

- Experimentation, endeavour and excellence in process and product, publication, performance and exhibition are recognised and valued.

- Health and wellbeing is enhanced through active engagement in creativity, for all ages, in all places.

We see arts and culture as shaping this future…

But what does our creative future look like in 2026?

The years to 2026 will witness exponential technological growth for a truly global conversation engaging all facets of life, digitally. It is thought by January 2026 that the European population will still be much the same but there will be 1 billion more people who inhabit the earth. Here

the promise of peace and prosperity will see our population rise by attracting more people to call here home.

For N Ireland to become a well-spring for creativity and offer support for opportunities locally, nationally and internationally we need the resources to do so. We require a comprehensive policy platform that we can look to, reflecting our ambition not only for the arts themselves but for our communities and our society so that together our economy and our creative futures can be strengthened. In so doing, the future well-being of society in terms of social cohesion, promoting equality, tackling exclusion and social deprivation will be supported alongside a flourishing creative industry sector with a sustainable arts infrastructure that can inspire our educators, our business leaders, visitors, investors, artists, young and old, rich and poor, gay and straight, the worried-well and those challenged by serious illness.

This can be a place that understands the power of the arts in and of themselves and that also has figured out how to translate that power into having meaningful, deep, resonating impact across our whole community.

Community Arts

The definition that Community Arts Partnership has held to and that has also been the foundation of Arts Council of Northern Ireland's strategies and policies relating to community arts for the last decade, is as follows:

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: artistic, social, cultural and environmental.

Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills.

Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

Community arts practice is concerned not only with such standard aesthetic preoccupations as the function of beauty and sublimity in art, but with the relations between art and society. Community arts wants to support transformation. It wants to harness that power to produce positive change in the world. Artists have highly developed analytical skills that give them the ability to offer different perspectives, both actually and philosophically. When these skills are incorporated into a purposeful process that includes many views, voices and opinions, it becomes the essential core of the creative dialogue within community arts processes. All aesthetic considerations are now amplified with other considerations. The concerns, ideals, ambitions and contexts of the participants are at play. In community arts, enabling people to be artists and as such empowering the creative ability to reflect and create is key. Then, as the definition runs, this can be applied to a range of circumstances and potentials. Because of this ability, community arts can reach and support people where they are. It is not encumbered by predetermined artistic ritual or history. There is real autonomy in the process and it can offer those, particularly those on the margins, an attractive, engaging and highly productive way to express that requires no more than their active willingness to take part.

But community arts can only work where we have a thriving artistic and creative environment, with local high-calibre artists, motivated with the potential and possibility of a dynamic arts

infrastructure. Investing and maintaining that necessary creative setting is the greatest challenge for the next 10 years and more.

The Four Stages of Community Arts Practice

Ownership

Authorship

Participation

Access
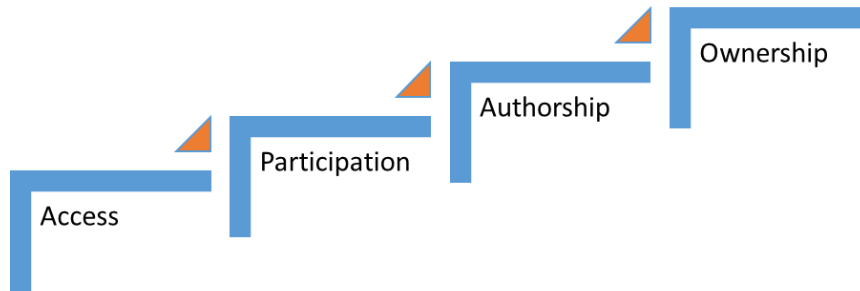
Section 3: A Strategic Framework[167]

SUGGESTED VISION
".....Investing in a Dynamic Creative Future Where Arts and Culture are celebrated, valued and available to all...."

SUGGESTED MISSION
The NI Executive is committed to investing, supporting and promoting Arts and Culture to maximize the impact and benefit of our vision

STRATEGIC THEMES						
Economy	Access for everyone	Cultural expression	Valuing the Arts	Creativity and Skills	Community cohesion	Well Being

OUR VALUES
Promoting equality of opportunity
Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion
Promoting Excellence
Rewarding Innovation
Connecting Community

OUR PRINCIPLES
Participative
Responsive (to need)
Open to all
Multi-layered and multi-disciplined
Outcomes-focused
Trend setting
Excellent

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[167] This framework could be presented in a number of ways e.g. see Appendix 2

Our Ambition for the Arts Strategy

Our vision of this strategy is for a Northern Ireland that values the arts and culture; recognises creativity as central for personal and social development; appreciates the educational, economic and health benefits of engagement in the arts and cultural life; aspires to and celebrates world class achievement; has real ambition for how Northern Ireland is seen as a vibrant centre of the arts and culture; and is committed at Executive level to a sustained programme of investment that will encourage access to and active participation in the arts and culture for everyone and in so doing, continue to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion.

1. The Economy

The relative social and cultural value of the arts are not only embedded in the everyday life of the community, but are also part and parcel of our economy. In creating a new economic narrative, where indices of wellbeing and new outcomes-focused socio-economic return can provide evidence, our policy makers and strategists need to describe as fully as possible, the ambition, infrastructure and targeted performance of this sector. Any strategy must not only recognise and protect the intrinsic cultural power as symbols of reaffirmation but also help define the economic and social benefits capable of being supported by a nuanced, expert and multifaceted applied arts context. The arts can play an increasingly central role to support policy outcomes across a variety of areas of government concerns. The interdepartmental ambition for the strategy as notionally set out in early 2015 for this 10 Year Strategy, can be reaffirmed across a range of key performance indicators in any new Department for Communities (DC).

In the face of so-called austerity, the arts are most definitely identifiable as precarious. The sustainability of the enterprise of artists, practitioners, craftspeople, participants and arts organisations, has never been more unsure. Without a definitive re-affirmation and protection of the central role the arts can and do play, the uncertainty of the arts precariat will only prevail.

Therefore in terms of return on investment, there are a range of economic models and matrices that all suggest the arts punch well above their weight promoting enhanced economic performance. Of course, making savings through actions that increase well-being, socially include and develop community cohesion, promote employability, build new, hitherto unheard-of jobs (particularly within the digital sphere), these all have immediate and lasting economic benefit. Defining the arts accurately so that the potential impact can be more fully understood and developed, should be fundamental to our strategy for the 10 years at least.

When the current architect of austerity describes the arts sector as "one of the best investments we can make as a nation" then the recognition of the importance of the arts to the economy must be further understood and harnessed. In his spending review last November, George Osborne noted that £1bn of funding adds "a quarter of a trillion pounds to the economy – not a bad return". So, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reckons the multiplying effect to be 250:1.

In terms of N Ireland, that might equate to £4.875 Billion which does seem somewhat overly ambitious given that Belfast City Council, as quoted by ACNI in their Strategy Response, only

put the multiplying effect in the city at 8 times. Still, in purely economic terms an 8 times larger return on investment is incredible, that's a 700% increase. Community Arts Partnership's parent New Belfast Community Arts Initiative calculated in the first demonstration report on the Social Return on Investment (SROI), that the multiplying effect of socially-engaged arts activity was more like 14:1, ie £14 for every £1 invested – this wasn't pure financial return but an aggregation of all the savings made through better health and wellbeing, artists employment, employability and educational attainment by participants, etc.

The most recent figures from the Dept. for Finance and Personnel and the Office of National Statistics, make for interesting reading too.

Only recently has DFP published GDP figures for NI themselves. The most recent figures they have for GDP (gross domestic product) and GVA (gross value added)

NI GDP Income approach 2012 (£bn)

Wages (a)	Profits (b)	Taxes less subsidies on products & production (c)	GDP (I) (a+b+c)
£18.5	£13.9	£4.9	£37.2

Overview of GDP by expenditure approach 2012.

GDP can be measured in three ways:

- **Output measure:** This is the value of the goods and services produced by all sectors of the economy; agriculture, manufacturing, energy, construction, the service sector and government

- **Expenditure measure:** This is the value of the goods and services purchased by households and by government, investment in machinery and buildings. It also includes the value of exports minus imports

- **Income measure:** The value of the income generated mostly in terms of profits and wages.

In theory all three approaches should produce the same number.

Expenditure measure below
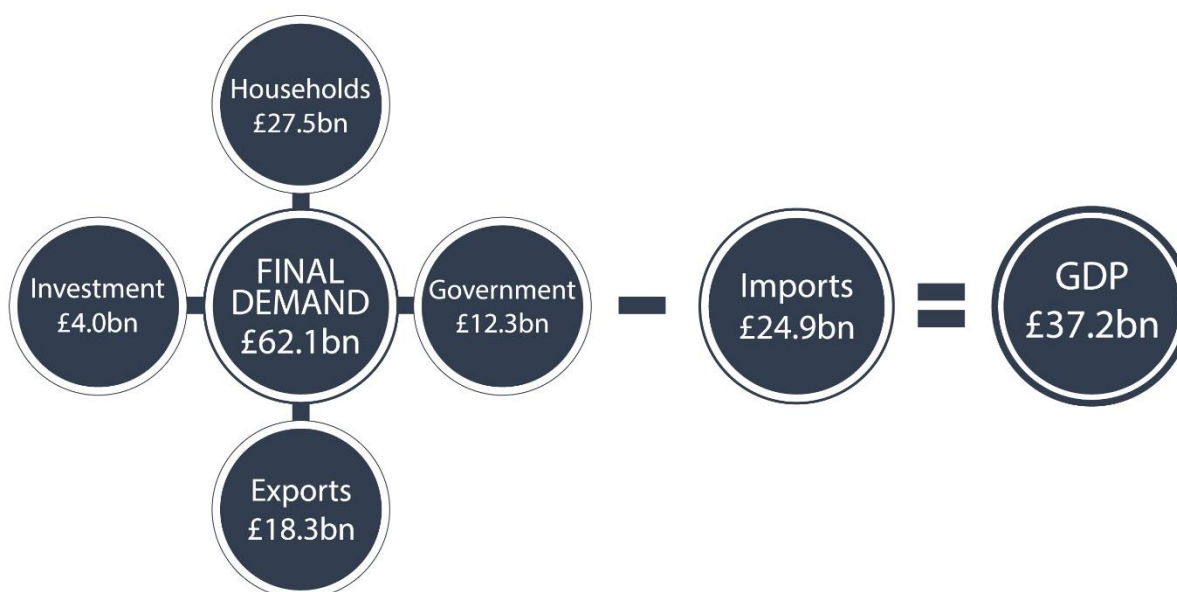
Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services. It is measured at current basic prices, which include the effect of inflation, excluding taxes (less subsidies) on products (for example, Value Added Tax).

UK Countries GVA[1,2], 2014[3]					
	GVA per head (£)[2]	GVA per head growth on 2013 (%)	GVA per head index (UK=100)	Total GVA (£m)[2]	Total GVA growth on 2013 (%)
United Kingdom	24,616	3.6	100.0	1,618,346	4.6
England	25,367	3.7	103.1	1,377,851	4.6
Wales	17,573	2.1	71.4	54,336	2.4
Scotland	23,102	4.2	93.9	123,543	4.6
Northern Ireland	18,682	1.9	75.9	34,384	2.5

1. GVA at current basic prices on workplace basis (background note 3).
2. Figures may not sum due to rounding in totals; per head (£) figures are rounded to the nearest pound.
3. 2014 estimates are provisional.
4. Per head and per head index figures exclude the statistical discrepancy and Extra-Regio: the off-shore contribution to GVA that cannot be assigned to any region (background note 1). These are included in the total GVA figure.
Source: Office for National Statistics

SHARE OF GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA) BY SECTOR, 2011				
Sector	England (%)	Wales (%)	Scotland (%)	Northern Ireland (%)
Agric., forestry & fishing	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.3
Mining & quarrying, electric, water, waste	2.5	4.2	7.2	2.1
Manufacturing	10.2	16.8	11.3	13.0
Construction	6.4	7.1	6.9	6.9
Retail, Transport, accom. & food	18.6	17.0	17.9	20.3
Info. and comms	7.2	2.8	3.0	3.1
Finance & insurance	9.1	4.3	7.1	5.0
Real estate	10.9	11.0	9.6	8.8
Professional & admin. services	12.4	6.9	10.4	6.9
Public admin., education & health	18.5	26.3	22.2	29.3
Arts, entertainment & recreation, other	3.5	3.1	3.5	3.3

Given that 3.3% of GVA is attributed to arts, entertainment & recreation, even if only one fifth (20%) of that value added were produced by just the arts themselves, that in itself would amount to **£227M**. It is more likely that the appropriate contribution is more than one in five, suggesting a ratio of return on investment closer to 12:1.

> *Did you know?*
> Arts engagement was found to be associated with higher wellbeing. This is valued at £1,084 per person per year, or £90 per person per month. (Department for Culture, Media & Sport **Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport, 2014)**

Per Capita Spend

In comparative terms, the people of Northern Ireland deserve as much if not more support for the arts sector. Historically, the arts have signalled a maintenance of normality and civility throughout the darkest days of our conflict. Today, this sector should be a flourishing vital part of the regeneration initiative, providing a vital, high profile platform for the enhancement of our social peace dividend.

COUNTRY	EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA
Northern Ireland	c £5.50 (2015)
Ireland	c £9.50 (2015)
England	c £10.50 (2013)
Scotland	c £17.50 (2014/15)
Australia	c £100 (expenditure over three tiers of government) (2013/2014)

In the culturalpoliciesnet online figures[168] determines that the median Public Cultural Expenditure per capita in EU Region, averaged between 2010 and 2013 was 1.54% of public expenditure and 0.56% of GDP. Northern Ireland DCAL spend expenditure currently sits at 0.78% and 0.2% respectively, leaving N Ireland struggling firmly at the bottom of any European League table.

If we look solely at Arts spend this falls to 0.23% (Public Spend) and 0.06% (GDP). In comparison, the Republic of Ireland government spent 0.11% of GDP on investment in Culture and the Arts, almost twice as much.

The table below from NESTA commissioned Creative Employment in the UK and EU (Dec 2105) shows that beyond the creative industries, the UK employs significantly greater levels of musicians and artists than the EU average, with a creative sector intensity second only to Sweden in the whole of EU. Northern Ireland, in the next 10 years, could play an even more meaningful aspect in this expanding part of the creative economy. The creative economy is not to be confused with the creative industries, rather should be seen as the embedded all-embracing sector of which the arts and creative industries are a subset.

EU/UK CREATIVE INDUSTRIES GROUPS, 2011-2013 COMPARISON			
EU-28			
DCMS Industry group	Industry employment	% of all creative industries employment	% of all employment
Advertising and marketing	1,923,000	17.14%	0.89%
Architecture	2,302,000	20.53%	1.07%
Design activities	377,000	3.36%	0.18%
Film, TV, video, radio and photography	877,000	7.82%	0.41%
IT, software and computer services	3,022,000	26.93%	1.40%
Publishing	1,001,000	8.93%	0.47%
Museums, galleries and libraries	600,000	5.35%	0.28%
Music, performing and visual arts	1,115,000	9.94%	0.52%
	11,218,000	**100%**	**5.21%**
UK			
Advertising and marketing	445,000	19.98%	1.52%
Architecture	437,000	19.68%	1.49%
Design activities	109,000	4.90%	0.37%

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[168] Monitoring Public Cultural Expenditure in Selected European Countries 2000-2013
Gross figures in € per capita and in % of total public expenditure or of GDP; all levels of government
State: July 2015

Film, TV, video, radio and photography	211,000	9.50%	0.72%
IT, software and computer services	562,000	25.28%	1.92%
Publishing	190,000	8.63%	0.65%
Museums, galleries and libraries	106,000	7.22%	0.36%
Music, performing and visual arts	161,000	4.81%	0.55%
	2,221,000	**100%**	**7.58%**

Did you know?

United Kingdom and Ireland have the highest share of art students in the EU

In 2009, in the EU27, 1.5 million people worked as writers or artists, equivalent to 0.7% of total employment. The highest numbers were recorded in Germany (330 000), the United Kingdom (200 000), France (180 000), Italy (120 000), the Netherlands (110 000) and Spain (100 000). Among the Member States, the share of writers or artists in total employment varied from 0.1% in Romania to 1.5% in Finland and Sweden.

During the academic year 2007/2008, 725 000 students, or 3.8% of all tertiary students in the EU27, studied arts. The United Kingdom (6.8%), Ireland (6.6%), Finland (5.6%) and Cyprus (5.5%) recorded the highest shares of tertiary students in arts.

SELECTION OF INDICATORS FROM THE CULTURAL SECTOR									
	Writers and creative artists* 2009		Tertiary students studying arts**, as % of all students, 2007/2008	Trade in cultural goods***, % of total external trade, 2010		Harmonised indices of consumer prices, 2010 (2005*100)			
	In thousands	% of total employment		Exports	Imports	Total	Cultural services****	Books	Newspapers
EU27	1,482	0.7	3.8	0.6	0.4	111.9	113.3	106.5	117.5
Belgium	26	0.6	5.1	0.2	0.3	111.4	114.7	111.3	116.2
Bulgaria	18	0.6	2.4	0.1	0.1	136.6	139.3	133.4	111.7
Czech Republic	36	0.7	1.9	0.5	0.4	113.7	127.6	112.3	121.7
Denmark	25	0.9	3.6	0.3	0.5	110.8	120.0	108.7	124.1
Germany	328	0.8	3.6	0.5	0.3	108.4	107.8	100.7	117.4
Estonia	3	0.5	5.1	0.7	0.2	127.0	139.7	119.2	139.9
Ireland	17	0.9	6.6	0.2	0.8	105.4	112.5	103.9	119.9
Greece	23	0.5	2.1	0.5	0.7	117.7	117.9	111.6	114.9
Spain	102	0.5	4.7	0.4	0.2	112.9	113.8	110.8	111.4
France	180	0.7	4.2	0.6	0.5	108.8	109.4	105.1	113.7
Italy	119	0.5	4.0	0.3	0.2	110.6	109.2	107.0	113.7
Cyprus	2	0.4	5.5	0.6	0.7	112.0	112.1	96.2	136.3
Latvia	7	0.7	3.3	0.6	0.2	137.9	172.3	143.2	153.1
Lithuania	7(un)	0.5	3.2	0.3	0.1	128.6	139.0	120.5	110.4
Luxemb.	2	0.7		0.1	0.5	113.1	111.5	101.2	121.8
Hungary	24	0.6	1.7	0.1	0.1	129.7	130.5	131.1	130.2
Malta	(u)		2.8	0.3	0.4	112.4	92.5	92.2	120.1
Netherl.	108	1.3	4.4	0.2	0.2	107.6	116.9	80.9	120.2
Austria	37	0.9	5.2	0.6	0.9	109.5	112.3	100.6	119.8
Poland	69	0.4	1.1	0.4	0.2	115.6	106.0	113.9	96.1
Portugal	21	0.4	5.2	0.2	0.4	108.9	111.5	114.4	115.5
Romania	13	0.1	1.2	0.1	0.2	135.2	114.7	119.3	180.4
Slovenia	6	0.6	1.9	0.3	0.2	115.6	115.8	104.3	127.8
Slovakia	12	0.5	1.7	0.3	0.2	112.2	111.4	120.3	120.4
Finland	36	1.5	5.6	0.2	0.4	110.5	119.7	103.9	119.2
Sweden	68	1.5	4.4	0.4	0.4	110.8	108.0	110.0	121.6
UK	196	0.7	6.8	1.8	0.8	114.5	119.9	115.7	123.7
Iceland	3	1.9	2.9			152.8	127.6	121.9	152.3
Norway	35	1.4	3.0			111.8	128.3	88.6	125.2
Switzerl.	37	0.9	4.3			104.1	105.5	95.6	111.3
Croatia	8(u)	0.5	2.6			115.9	117.6	115.2	108.0
Macedo.	2	0.3	1.8						
Turkey	37	0.2	1.4			151.4	129.3	197.4	179.2

In the next 10 years, if N Ireland is not to lose further ground to our nearest neighbours in GB and Ireland targeted investment must be made. If we are to avoid remaining stubbornly rooted to the foot of all European assessment tables of cultural provision, rates of investment must be increased.

Linking investment to the EU median per capita level would greatly enhance revenue funding for the arts. This in turn would allow for less reliance on Lottery funds, leaving them to support the good causes and additionality that they are legally obliged to deliver and see project work flourish beyond recognised arts organisations and into diverse community and schools programmes.

Creative readiness in the digital age must also be a funded commitment, mirroring a government commitment to greater connectivity through broadband. Future employability for generations will be determined on our investment over the next years, in the digital literacy not just of the very young, but across our whole community.

Strategic Aims

- Provide sufficient investment to maintain and grow the arts.

- Recognise and promote the range of cost and social benefits gained through the arts

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

- Increase revenue funding to the arts
- Link investment to EU median per capita level (1.54% of public expenditure and 0.56% of GDP)
- Bring forward innovative tax incentive proposals to benefit creative economy
- Develop integrated creative digital policy across government departments
- Maintain and promote linkage between community, professional and academic arts platforms.

2. Access for Everybody

By access, we mean much more than physical location, ease of attendance or the price of a ticket. The fundamental issue is that the potential of the arts should be enjoyed by all and not only by those with the material resources, educational advantage or family tradition.

So beyond having physical access to art locally in our towns, cities and rural areas, we require enabled access at crucial staging points in our lives; within formal and informal education; within our workplace, care setting, health setting; within our public services; on our public broadcaster; at all stages of our curriculum; in our economy.

Strategic Aims

- Recognising the role the arts play in opening up access to creativity.

- Appreciating that all arts organisations are volunteer-led and support invaluable voluntary engagement with arts and culture.

- Understanding the barriers to active arts participation and finding creative ways to remove them.

- Making all the connections across government and the arts community realise the fullest range of benefits and support innovative new projects.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

- Strategic alignment within the new Department for communities.

- Strategic vision with departmental support for arm's length body (ALB) discrete policy & action plans, fully costed and resourced for implementation.

- Improved sustainability for key arts and infrastructural organisations.

- Improved opportunity for innovation and development.

3. Cultural Expression

Cultural diversity is an asset, rich in heritage and potential, for both individuals and societies. The protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity is an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations[169].

Promoting creativity and strengthening cultural production and expression enables a deeper engagement within society, allowing for the sharing of a rich and diverse cultural heritage, for citizen and visitor, practitioner and consumer alike. Cultural expression gives us the means to understand our past, illuminate our present, dream of our future and celebrate our uniqueness.

Strategic Aims

- Finding new ways to bring people into greater contact with the arts.

- Enhancing the potential for community engagement to enhance active participation.

- Recognising the potential - and the urgency - of bringing everyone into the new media world.

- Encouraging children to value the power of their own imaginations.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

- Properly conceived and implemented audience and participant development policy, with key expert stakeholders across sector.

- Cross-departmental community arts strategy to dovetail with community initiatives like TIBUC and Racial Equality Strategy with signposted tri-annual review.

- Digital development programme, showing ambition for local readiness to take lead in transforming technological uptake.

- Children's Creative Futures, a development programme aimed at crucial early years arts and creative interventions, fully costed and implemented across region.

4. Valuing the Arts

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[169] (UNESCO Cultural Diversity Convention, ratified on 07/12/2007 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The fundamental power that the arts hold for an individual as audience member or creative producer is vast and varied. This intrinsic value of entertaining us, inspiring us and providing us with uniquely pleasurable experiences is hard to quantify, but we know its effect, implicitly and we enjoy it every day. To become the authors of a dynamic, cultural future requires imagination and energy, both readily abundant in a healthy, resourceful creative environment. We must nurture the fullest ecology of the arts and their potential, from the cradle to the grave and recognise the benefits to all by doing so.

But we further understand that the arts and culture sector play a valuable role in promoting social and economic goals through local regeneration, attracting tourists, the development of talent and innovation, supporting education and skills development, improving health and wellbeing, and delivering a host of other supporting services across a diverse range of needs and interests.

Any strategy should seek to harmonise and facilitate the ability of all to make application for public funds. Currently, there are as many processes as there are funders, even within government. There should be a review of all funding processes, with recognition of the capacity required to make application and a set of guidance developed that assist all arts funding in all government departments.

Strategic Aims

- Appreciate the role that the arts and culture can play in personal and social development of everyone at all ages.

- Having an ambition for everyone to realise their full potential in engaging with the arts and culture.

- Facilitate the contribution of all those involved in arts and culture.

- Understanding the benefits of arts and culture for Northern Ireland's place in the world.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

- Integrate the arts and culture strategy within next PfG.

- Agree a set of strategic commitments and cross-departmental outcomes within CSRs 2015 – 2026.

- Determine there will be a new concordat to facilitate the applying for and adjudication of arts-related grant-aid.

- Align arts and cultural budgets at pro-rated median EU levels.

- Agree commitments from new Super-Councils to ensure full integration of arts and culture overarching framework into all community planning.

- Champion a percent art scheme, as part of the corporation tax re-investment process.

- Determine a raised tax threshold for all artists and arts professionals.

5. Creativity and Skills

Arts and culture directly promote learning and skills development within our schools, communities and workplaces. Our young people can acquire not only technical creative abilities but in doing so enhance literacy, language development, mathematical attainment and future employability.

In a 2013 OECD report commented on the arts role in society:

By artistic skills, we mean not only the technical skills developed in different arts forms (playing an instrument, composing a piece, dancing, choreographing, painting and drawing, acting, etc.) but also the habits of mind and behaviour that are developed in the arts. Arts education matters because people trained in the arts play a significant role in the innovation process in OECD countries: the arts should undoubtedly be one dimension of a country's innovation strategy.

(© OECD 2013 *Art for Art's Sake? The Impact of Arts Education* (Winner, Goldstein and Vincent-Lancrin, 2013))

The same report spells out in its introduction:

In knowledge-based societies, innovation is a key engine of economic growth, and arts education is increasingly considered as a means to foster the skills and attitudes that innovation requires, beyond and above artistic skills and cultural sensitivity.

Indeed, *OECD (2010), The OECD Innovation Strategy. Getting a Head Start on Tomorrow and OECD (2012), Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*, both point to the arts having a role in developing a necessary creative faculty within innovation-based societies.

Ultimately, the arts are an essential part of the forming and functioning of any country, and a key barometer as to the general "health" of that society itself. Across all society, the arts increase life chances by enhancing skills, confidence and personal achievement, supporting wellbeing and ambition.

Creativity and skills are the domain of the artists and producers, crafters and makers. Over 35% of our undergraduates leave with only 5% returning. In the arts, some our most talented are forced to leave to find greater opportunity elsewhere or opt for other career choices. In the next 10 years, we must make living and working in the arts in N Ireland attractive and sustainable. Innovating tax breaks for corporations through our new tax-varying powers at the Assembly, could make corporate investment in the arts very attractive. Wedding a 1% Art Scheme to corporation tax processes would see a huge potential investment be realised. Increasing tax thresholds for artists and producers similar to that of the Republic of Ireland, would attract and maintain a creative population living and working locally. Introducing dedicated tax measures for the creative economy would attract not just organisation wishing to avoid taxation, but those wanting to establish themselves in creatively dynamic environments. Where some might aim for tax havens, Northern Ireland can be a Creative Haven and recognised as such internationally.

Strategic Aims

- Exploring educational opportunities to foster creativity.

- Seeing the power of creativity in our personal lives.

- Recognising the value of the experience of creative arts in other work-related spheres.

- Developing the skills and talents that will see the economic potential of creative insights.

- Support living and working for artists and creative organisations.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

For example;

- Promote creative digital literacy programmes to dovetail with DEL & DETI targets.

- Extend and support curriculum based arts participation.

- Maintain and extend creative apprenticeship programme.

- Maintain and extend creative learning in non-formal learning environments.

- Extend and support informal community-based arts participation.

- Introduce tax breaks, investment schemes and increased threshold variations for creatives.

6. Community Connections

The arts and culture sector have an unparalleled ability to creatively support community cohesion, facilitating welcoming and safe opportunities to creatively explore and celebrate greater connections among and between communities. Creativity offers active participation in intercultural, intercommunity, inter-generational and inter-ability projects whilst also supporting new and diverse communities and audiences to take part in the arts. Promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion has been central to the role of publicly-funded arts for decades. With dedicated expertise, the arts are a key instrument in connecting individuals and communities to new opportunities, learning and practical life-enhancing benefit. The PETPSE agenda can continue to be well served by excellent local practice.

We cannot underestimate the challenge not just for artistic practitioners but for our society as a whole, a challenge that has defeated many and that has riven public debate and kept communities apart for decades. The arts have the power to help change that. The arts can recognise more immediately a shared ownership around a range of issues and the powerful positive potentials that can flow. The arts offers government and society a new dimension in reducing the barriers within our society.

In particular, given both TIBUC and the Racial Equality Strategy, the role of the arts as the most able support to inter-community and intercultural dialogue must be supported, not just in socially engaged creative programmes, but in more embedded mainstreaming of a determination to equalise opportunity for all sections of the community. This requires organisations, funders, agencies and programmes to incorporate truly intercultural practice, beyond the outmoded forms of multiculturalism. This will fundamentally promote the emergence of cultural empathy and deeply social and artistic dialogue.

Furthermore, recognising the role that the arts can play in stimulating investment, cultural tourism, international exchange, world-class exhibitions, performances, publications and practice, the next 10 years will be crucial to cementing Northern Ireland's reputation.

Strategic Aims

- Giving everyone in Northern Ireland a greater understanding of the rich traditions across all communities.

- Creating and supporting opportunities for the arts to bring people together.

- Recognising the richness and variety that new residents of Northern Ireland bring to its social and cultural life.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

For example;

- Extend range and reach of intercultural arts and creativity.

- Develop and enact discrete policy platforms.

- Recognise and include arts and culture provision within all community-based initiatives.

- Encourage local government to deploy creative engagement in community planning.

- Encourage all government departments to develop policy for creative community cohesion practices.

- Encourage the streamlining of funding and reporting processes to allow for the greatest possible take-up of opportunity.

- Adequately resource arts provision within initiatives like TIBaUC and the Racial Equality Strategy.

7. Wellbeing

Wellbeing will become a more widely quoted social measurement in the next 10 years. Maintaining good health and actively improving the health of others in medical settings can be very effectively achieved through the arts. Recognising the potential of arts and culture to improve people's lives in health, education, work and learning will be a key facet of arts engagement.

The government-commissioned **Five Ways to Wellbeing (nef 2008)** are: *Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give*. It has been noted that '*these five actions correspond closely to behaviours that can emerge in well-designed participatory arts projects*' (Cameron et al, 2013). Another example, the public mental health framework **Confident Communities, Brighter Futures** (DoH, 2010) states that mental health is intrinsic to wellbeing which it defines as: '*a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and wider environment'.* Participation in the arts and creativity is given as an example of how promoting participation and purpose can enhance engagement for both individuals and communities.

Strategic Aims

- Recognise the benefits of arts and culture in promoting health and wellbeing in medical and non- settings.

- Encourage and support the greater engagement with the arts and culture in healthcare settings.

- Support a greater understanding of the work opportunities opened up by active engagement with the arts.

- Recognise and promote the life-long health benefits of attending and participating in arts and culture.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

For example;

- Invest to maintain and expand participatory engagement in the arts for all in medical settings.
- Commission and pilot wellbeing outcomes frameworks for arts organisations.
- Support greater accessibility for all in participatory arts activity, especially the very young and the elderly.
- Encourage new high level interdepartmental platform across policy areas, to promote wellbeing through arts and culture.

Section 4: The Challenge

Underpinning any strategy or plan must be a commitment of resources. As part of the consultation process it may be helpful to raise a number of challenging questions of government and funding bodies .We have set out below some of the questions and challenges that the Forum believe the NI Executive need to be consider and address to turn words in action.

What can the Executive do to promote and support Arts and Culture?

Some practical proposals

- Agree a set of strategic commitments and outcomes within the next CSR.

- Embed the arts and culture strategy by linking it to budget processes thereby informing the allocation process.

- Agree commitments from Councils to ensure full integration of arts and culture overarching framework.

- Invest in communicating the arts and culture strategy to all citizens.

- Convene an Interdepartmental Strategy Delivery Group to monitor the implementation of any forthcoming strategy.

- Prepare and present to the Assembly, an annual report that advises progress on the implementation of that strategy.

- Encourage other Departments to make a positive contribution based upon a clear understanding of how do arts and culture contribute to the Departmental objectives.

Section 5: Conclusion

Supporting our collective artistic potential is a responsibility shared by a great many people and agencies. In fact, as culture is in fact *a way of organising our adaptive strategies, within our given parameters of place and technology*[170] and that *offering new ways of seeing or being, responds rapidly to the immediacy and interaction of people and places* then investment in this area of social interaction is key.

The arts matter in all our lives. They matter to our society. They make a significant statement about us, about the place in which we live and about its place in the wider world. Arts and culture are central in all our lives. The arts should be there for each and every one of us. To realise the full potential that individuals have, to create a rich cultural experience for everyone requires time, effort and support. It requires investment. This is true in all spheres of our lives. Investment is key, from central and local government and from the private sector. Participation as professionals and volunteers, audiences, artists and citizens is life-changing.

Community Arts Partnership represents the work and aspiration of over 4,000 people annually who want to become creatively active. In 15 years, we have seen demand for every aspect of our programme surge.

The consultation process and strategy is an opportunity to inform policy makers and tell the story how the arts make a key contribution to our lives and that the need to invest is crucial because of the incredible range of benefits. That is why it stakes a claim for the committed and sustained engagement and support of the Executive now and in the future.

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[170] CS foreword

EXPLORING CHANGE

APPENDIX 2.2

1 ECONOMY
Strategic Aims

Provide **SUFFICIENT INVESTMENT** to maintain and grow the arts.	Recognise and promote the range of cost and **SOCIAL BENEFITS** gained through the arts

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

INCREASE REVENUE FUNDING to the arts	Link investment to **EU MEDIAN PER CAPITA LEVEL** (1.54% of public expenditure and 0.56% of GDP)	Bring forward **INNOVATIVE TAX INCENTIVE** proposals to benefit creative economy
Develop **INTEGRATED CREATIVE DIGITAL POLICY** across government departments		Maintain and promote **LINKAGE BETWEEN COMMUNITY, PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC ARTS PLATFORMS**

2 ACCESS FOR EVERYBODY
Strategic Aims

RECOGNISING THE ROLE the arts play in opening up access to creativity.	Appreciating that all arts organisations are **VOLUNTEER-LED** and support invaluable voluntary engagement with arts and culture.
UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS to active arts participation and finding creative ways to remove them.	Making all the **CONNECTIONS** across government and the arts community realise the fullest range of benefits and support innovative new projects.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT within the new Department for communities.	**STRATEGIC VISION** with departmental support for arm's length body (ALB) discrete policy & action plans, fully costed and resourced for implementation.
IMPROVED SUSTAINABILITY for key arts and infrastructural organisations.	**IMPROVED OPPORTUNITY** for innovation and development.

3 CULTURAL EXPRESSION
Strategic Aims

Finding new ways to **BRING PEOPLE INTO GREATER CONTACT WITH THE ARTS**.	**ENHANCING THE POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** to enhance active participation.
Recognising the potential - and the urgency - of bringing everyone into the **NEW MEDIA WORLD**.	**ENCOURAGING CHILDREN** to value the power of their own imaginations.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

Properly conceived and implemented **AUDIENCE AND PARTICIPANT DEVELOPMENT POLICY**, with key expert stakeholders across sector.	**CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNITY ARTS STRATEGY** to dovetail with community initiatives like TIBUC and Racial Equality Strategy with signposted tri-annual review.
DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, showing ambition for local readiness to take lead in transforming technological uptake.	**CHILDREN'S CREATIVE FUTURES**, a development programme aimed at crucial early years arts and creative interventions, fully costed and implemented across region.

4   VALUING THE ARTS
Strategic Aims

Appreciate the role that the **ARTS AND CULTURE** can play **IN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT** of everyone at all ages.

Having an ambition for **EVERYONE TO REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL** in engaging with the arts and culture.

FACILITATE THE CONTRIBUTION of all those involved in arts and culture.

UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF ARTS AND CULTURE for Northern Ireland's place in the world.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

INTEGRATE THE ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY within next PfG.

Agree a **SET OF STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS** and cross-departmental outcomes within CSRs 2015 – 2026.

Determine there will be a new concordat to **FACILITATE THE APPLYING FOR AND ADJUDICATION OF ARTS-RELATED GRANT-AID.**

Align arts and cultural **BUDGETS** at pro-rated **MEDIAN EU LEVELS.**

Agree commitments from new Super-Councils to ensure full integration of arts and culture overarching framework into all **COMMUNITY PLANNING.**

CHAMPION A PERCENT ART SCHEME, as part of the corporation tax re-investment process.

Determine a **RAISED TAX THRESHOLD** for all artists and arts professionals.

5 CREATIVITY AND SKILLS
Strategic Aims

Exploring **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** to foster creativity.	Seeing the **POWER OF CREATIVITY** in our personal lives.	Recognising the **VALUE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF CREATIVE ARTS** in other work-related spheres.

DEVELOPING THE SKILLS AND TALENTS that will see the economic potential of creative insights.	**SUPPORT LIVING AND WORKING** for artists and creative organisations.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

Promote **CREATIVE DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMMES** to dovetail with DEL & DETI targets.	Extend and support **CURRICULUM BASED ARTS PARTICIPATION**.	Maintain and extend **CREATIVE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME.**
Maintain and extend **CREATIVE LEARNING IN NON-FORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**.	Extend and support **INFORMAL COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS PARTICIPATION.**	Introduce **TAX BREAKS, INVESTMENT SCHEMES AND INCREASED THRESHOLD** variations for creatives.

6 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
Strategic Aims

Giving everyone in Northern Ireland a greater **UNDERSTANDING OF THE RICH TRADITIONS** across all communities.	Creating and supporting **OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ARTS TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.**	Recognising the **RICHNESS AND VARIETY** that new residents of Northern Ireland bring to its social and cultural life.

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

Extend range and reach of **INTERCULTURAL ARTS** and creativity.	Develop and enact discrete **POLICY PLATFORMS.**	Recognise and include arts and culture provision within all **COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES.**
Encourage local government to deploy **CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY PLANNING.**		Encourage all government departments to develop policy for **CREATIVE COMMUNITY COHESION PRACTICES.**

7 WELLBEING
Strategic Aims

Recognise the **BENEFITS OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING** in medical and non- settings.	Encourage and support the greater engagement with the **ARTS AND CULTURE IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS.**
Support a greater understanding of the **WORK OPPORTUNITIES OPENED** up by active engagement with the arts.	Recognise and promote the **LIFE-LONG HEALTH BENEFITS** of attending and participating in arts and culture.

⬇ ⬇ ⬇ ⬇ ⬇

How do we get there between 2016-2026?

Invest to **MAINTAIN AND EXPAND PARTICIPATORY ENGAGEMENT IN THE ARTS** for all in medical settings.	Commission and pilot **WELLBEING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORKS** for arts organisations
Support **GREATER ACCESSIBILITY** for all in participatory arts activity, especially the very young and the elderly.	Encourage new high level **INTERDEPARTMENTAL PLATFORM ACROSS POLICY AREAS**, to promote wellbeing through arts and culture.

EXPLORING CHANGE

APPENDIX 3

Organisations

Questionnaire no: Date received:

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete the following questions for the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) and the Rural Community Network (RCN). Below is a series of questions which are designed to gauge what makes a successful arts project when working with people in rural areas. It is generally acknowledged that Community Arts practice outside of the main cities in Northern Ireland has received less investment than in urban areas, and it is hoped that your responses will contribute to changing this. The answers you provide will be used to write an evaluation report on how community arts can support community development in rural areas, and will be made freely available to support future funding applications and advocacy work.

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) takes the lead in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice in Northern Ireland. CAP is an independent advocate for community arts with a mission to promote, develop and deliver community-based arts activity to affect positive change.

Rural Community Network (RCN) is a regional voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality. It is a region-wide, grass-roots organisation employing a community development approach.

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

Put simply, community art practice develops original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change. In this way, Community Arts has a different meaning to what is traditionally known as 'Art' or 'Performance'.

We would really like to find out what YOU feel the issues are in rural areas, and if you think that arts activities can help to address any of these. The more information you can give us, the more relevant

the report will be. Therefore, please feel free to be as honest as possible – all responses will be treated in confidence. Your experience will be invaluable in improving future provision for projects in rural areas. Your responses and the resulting report will also be used to provide evidence for funding bodies, and how funding can be used to bridge current gaps in rural Northern Ireland.

There will be an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to state whether or not you would be happy to have a named or anonymous quote included in the final report.

Section 1: Basic Contact Details of organisation:

Name of Organisation:

Address (inc postcode):

Phone no.:

Contact name/work phone no (if different):

Email address:

Section 2: Basic Information about organisation:

1. What is the purpose/mission statement of your organisation?

2. What is the staffing structure of the organisation (eg: director, project leaders, project workers, etc)

3. Do you have permanent staff work in your organisation, if so, how many?

4. Do you have volunteers? If so, how many volunteers work in your organisation on a *regular* weekly basis?

0	
1-4	x
5-10	
10+	

5. Who uses the organisation (drop-in users, community groups, subscribed members, etc)

6. What age ranges are regularly catered for?   If so, please tick ✓ all that apply

Any age adult	
Any age children	
Pre-school children (0-4)	
Primary age children (5-11)	
Age 12-15	
Age 16-25	
Age 26-50	
Age 50-65	
Over 65	

7. What is the main (60%+) perceived community background of people using your organisation?

Nationalist	
Unionist	
Other	

8. Do you specifically target activities to minority or socially excluded groups? Y

If so, please tick ✓ all that apply

Ethnic minorities	
Disabled people	x
LGBT	
Older people	
NEETS	
Unemployed people	
Ex-prisoners	
Other (please specify – eg young teenage mothers, etc	

9. Do you offer any of the following (please tick ✓ all that apply)

Cross-community activities	
Inter-cultural activities	
Inter-generational activities	

10. What geographical area does the organisation cater for?

11. Does your organisation seek to tackle any of the following issues facing its members in rural areas? (If so, please tick ✓ all that apply):

	Directly	Indirectly	Not at all
Social isolation			
Access to services			
Sectarianism			
Community relations			
Youth Unemployment			
Unemployment in general			

Poverty			
Racism			
Lack of opportunities in education and training			
Lack of opportunities in re-training			
Lack of opportunities in general (please expand)			
Other (please state)			

12. What community activities do you run on a regular basis?

Section 3: Your experience of *Community Arts* Activities

1.   How much experience does your organisation have of participating in *Community Arts* activities over the past five years (see introduction on page 1 for definition of Community Arts)?

We have organised or been involved in: please tick ✓

5+ projects	
Less than 5 projects	
zero projects **(please go to Section 4)**	

2. Please indicate the type of Community Arts activities you have offered. (please tick ✓ all that apply)

Literature and Verbal Arts (inc poetry)	
Fashion	
Drawing/ Painting	
Sculpture	
Murals	
Mosaic	
Film-making, animation	
Dance	
Drama	
Music	
Photography	
Circus skills	
Carnival arts (mask and costume making)	
Craft (inc sewing, knitting, crochet)	
Traditional arts (inc music, dance, craft)	
Drama and theatre	
Other (please specify)	

3. Where do these activities usually take place?   (Please tick✓ all that apply)

On your premises	
In a community building	
In a purpose built facility (eg in a theatre, art room, etc)	

Outdoors	
No fixed space – it depends on what is available at the time	
Other (please specify)	

4. Which statement best describes how often Community Arts activities take place through your organisation?   (Please tick✓ one)

Once a week	
More than once a week	
1-3 times a month	
5-10 times a year	
Less than 4 times a year	
Occasional one off events	

5.   Have you ever used Community Arts activities for the following reasons? (Please indicate to what extent if at all)

	Frequently	Occasionally	Have never considered	Would never use for this
Working towards a particular event				
To access particular funding				
In response to user requests				
To take advantage of skills offered by staff				
To tie in with the mission statement of the organisation				
To address a particular issue (eg poverty, social isolation, racism)				
To counter sectarianism				
To build community relations				
To develop skills of participants (eg communication skills for unemployed people etc)				
As an educational or training tool				
To develop and/or extend existing opportunities				
To raise awareness of issues/as an aid to advocacy				
To increase access to services for particular groups				

As an aid to developing services (eg, as a tool to information gathering, or getting feedback from members, etc)				
As an aid to long-term and sustainable community development				
Enterprise				

6. How are your arts activities funded?   (please tick ✓ all that apply)

Grant	
Own funds	
Provided free of charge (eg through another organization)	
Other (please specify)	

7. Who runs your arts activities?   (please tick ✓ all that apply)

Staff members from your organisation	
Volunteers	
Outside artists	
Partner organisations	
Other (please specify)	

8. Have you ever produced any artistic outcomes from projects (please tick ✓ all that apply)?

Exhibition	
Music CD	
Film	

Artwork produced for the community	
Performance	
Festival Performance/Work Experience	

9.   What would you consider to be the main benefits of offering Community Arts (C.A.) activities for the people who access your organization?

	Very much agree	Agree somewhat	Don't agree	Not sure
Participants are more confident as a result				
C.A. bring diverse communities together				
C.A. help improve community relations				
Participants learn new skills				
They help break down barriers between people				
They encourage collaborative ways of working				
They are fun				
They increase what's on offer by our organization				
They are easily accessible to everyone				
C.A. help people get jobs (through skills, confidence building, etc)				
C.A. help promote physical and mental well-being				

Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included				
C.A. contribute to people's education and training				
C.A. is sensitive to individual needs				
C.A. work for all ages				
C.A. help extend the impact our organisation has on the surrounding communities				

10.   What (if any) difficulties have you encountered in providing arts activities?

	Very difficult	Some difficulty	No difficulty	Not sure
Lack of interest/uptake				
Lack of adequate resources				
Difficulties in participants getting to the activities				
Lack of expertise / knowledge in the arts				
Not having the right people to run activities				
Difficulty in getting artists to visit rural areas				
Artists don't have adequate knowledge of rural issues				
Lack of funding				
Lack of adequate space				
Certain communities never access the activities				
Difficulties in publicising activities				
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects				

Artists don't understand community development issues				
Target participants don't understand community development issues				
Communication between the organisation, the participants and the artists				
There seems to be a difference between what the organisation aims to achieve and what participants want to achieve through community arts				
Other (please state)				

11.   Do you regularly consult participants on their involvement in Community Arts activities?

Yes	
No	

If so, how often?

Weekly	
After every workshop	
Monthly	
More than once per project	
Once per project	
2-6 times a year	
Once a year	
Less than once a year	

Section 4: Provision of Future Arts Activities

1.   Would your organisation be interested in providing Community Arts activities in the future?

Yes	
No (please go to 'A Final Word' on page 14)	

2.   What would the main obstacles be in people accessing Community Arts activities you provide?

	Major obstacle	Minor obstacle	No obstacle	Not sure
Lack of supporting infrastructure (eg public transport)				

Our facilities are not adequate for the groups we want to provide for				
Our organisation isn't well known				
We don't have the capability to publicise our activities				
We appeal to certain groups in the community more than others				
Lack of funding				
Poverty in the surrounding area is an issue				
Activities can't be arranged at a time that's suitable for some groups we'd like to provide for				
Other (please state)				

Do you think the arts can be used to address real issues in rural areas?

Yes	
No	

Please briefly explain your answer

3.   In an ideal world, what support would you need in order to provide high quality, meaningful arts projects?

	A lot of support	Some support	No support	Not sure
Better transport provision for participants to access activities				
Knowing how to get in touch with artists who can deliver high quality activities		x		

Knowing how to get in touch with artists who have an understanding of issues faced by rural communities			x	
Developing partnerships with other organisations		x		
Developing long-term Community Arts projects				
Involving hard to reach groups of people			x	
Attracting participation from more diverse groups in the surrounding communities		x		
Developing projects which progress one to the other and have long-term goals			x	
Support to develop funding applications		x		
Access to high quality arts equipment			x	
Access to purpose built facilities			x	
Better access to high speed broadband			x	
Support with marketing and promotion		x		
Support with developing an online presence			x	
Other (please state)				

A Final Word

If you wish to make any additional comments regarding the questions above, please feel free to do

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be invaluable in researching the impact of the arts in rural areas in Northern Ireland. The information gathered will be used to create a final report which will be made readily available to support the development of future arts activities in rural NI.

What will happen with the information gathered from the questionnaires?

1. Your views will be included in a published report. Please state whether you are happy to have your name attached to these, or if you would rather remain anonymous:

 Either

- *I am happy to have my name included in the final report*

- *I would prefer to remain anonymous**

2. Where appropriate, CAP would like to include quotes within the final report to support the qualitative data. Please state below if you are happy to be quoted in the final report:

- *I am happy to be quoted by name*

- *I am happy to be quoted, but would prefer to remain anonymous*

- *I am not happy to be quoted**

* please tick ✓ as appropriate

After the project, interview reports will be kept on computer file for future use – are you happy for us to use the information you have provided in future research? Yes

Signed

Name

Date:

Artists

Questionnaire no: Date received:

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete the following questions for the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) and the Rural Community Network (RCN). Below is a series of questions which are designed to gauge what makes a successful arts project when working with people in rural areas. It is generally acknowledged that Community Arts practice outside of the main cities in Northern Ireland has received less investment than in urban areas, and it is hoped that your responses will contribute to changing this. The answers you provide will be used to write an evaluation report on how community arts can support community development in rural areas, and will be made freely available to support future funding applications and advocacy work.

> **A 'rural' area is defined in Northern Ireland by population size as an area, village or small town with less than 5,000 inhabitants.**

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) takes the lead in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice in Northern Ireland. CAP is an independent advocate for community arts with a mission to promote, develop and deliver community-based arts activity to affect positive change. **Rural Community Network (RCN)** is a regional voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality. It is a region-wide, grass-roots organisation employing a community development approach.

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

Put simply, community art practice develops original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change. In this way, Community Arts has a different meaning to what is traditionally known as 'Art' or 'Performance'.

We would really like to find out what YOU feel the issues are in rural areas, and if you think that arts activities can help to address any of these. The more information you can give us, the more relevant the report will be. Therefore, please feel free to be as honest as possible – all responses will be treated in confidence. The resulting report will be used to provide evidence for funding bodies as to how funding can be used to bridge current gaps in rural Northern Ireland. There will be an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to state whether you would be happy to have a named or anonymous quote included in the final report.

Section 1: Contact Details and basic details

1. Name:

2. Phone no:

3. Email address: sheenakelly21@yahoo.ie

4. Place of residence and postcode:

5. Art forms used (please state any that you use):

Section 2: Experience, knowledge and scope of working in rural areas

1. How much experience do you have in delivering Community Arts Projects in rural areas in Northern Ireland over the past five years? (see introduction on page 1 for definition of 'Community Arts' and 'rural areas')?

    I have delivered: (please tick ✓)

5+ projects	
Less than 5 projects	
zero projects **(please go to Section 4)**	

2. Which statement best describes how often you deliver community arts projects in rural areas?   (please tick✓)

Once a week	
More than once a week	
1-3 times a month	
5-10 times a year	
Less than 4 times a year	
Occasional one off events	

3. Have you ever used Community Arts activities in rural areas for the following reasons? (Please indicate to what extent if at all)

	Frequently	Occasionally	Have never considered	Would never use for this
Working towards a particular event				
To tie in with the mission statement of an organisation				
To address a particular issue (eg poverty, social isolation, racism)				
To counter sectarianism				
To build community relations				
To develop skills of participants (eg communication skills for unemployed people etc)				
As an educational or training tool				
To develop and/or extend existing opportunities				
To raise awareness of issues or as an aid to advocacy				
To increase access to services for particular groups (eg hard to reach groups or targeted groups)				

As an aid to developing services (eg, as a tool to information gathering, or getting feedback from members, etc)				
As an aid to long-term and sustainable community development				
Other (please state) Bring professional arts to rural communitys				

4. Over what time period have the projects you have delivered taken place? (please tick ✓ all that apply)

One-off projects (lasting one day or less)	
2-3 sessions	
6-10 sessions	
3-6 months	
6-12 months	
Longer than a year	
Other (please state)	

5. Is there anything that would prevent you from travelling to rural areas to deliver a community arts project? (please tick ✓ all that apply)

If the location of the project is remote and difficult to get to	
The expense of travelling to the location	
The time of travelling to the location	
Not knowing very much about rural issues	
Lack of access to resources	
Other (please state)	

6. Have you ever produced any artistic outcomes from projects (please tick ✓ any that apply)?

Exhibition	
Music CD	
Film	
Artwork produced for the community	
Performance	
Other (please state)	

Section 3: Working with rural communities

4. From your experience of working with rural communities, what do you consider to be the most pressing issues they face? (please rank **up to five** in order of importance from 1- 5, where 1= most pressing)

	EXAMPLE	
Social isolation	1	
Access to services	5	
Sectarianism		
Community relations		
Youth Unemployment	2	
Unemployment in general		
Poverty	4	
Racism		
Lack of opportunities in education and training	3	
Lack of opportunities in re-training		
Lack of opportunities in general		
Other/s (please state)		

Yes	

5. Do you think the arts can be used to address real issues in rural areas?

No	

Please briefly explain your answer

My work in dungannon works closely with young people from different ethnic backgrounds to give them a voice, a sense of belonging but to also tackle racism and prejudice. adults with disabilities are very socially deprived in Dungannon area also and to have access to arts is a very empowering thing.

6. What (if any) difficulties have you encountered in providing arts activities in rural areas?

	Very difficult	Some difficulty	No difficulty	Not sure
Lack of interest/uptake				
Lack of adequate resources				
Difficulties in participants getting to the activities				
Lacking knowledge about rural areas				
Inconsistent participant attendance				
Lack of adequate space for activities				
Participants don't have an understanding of community arts				
The host organization doesn't have an understanding of community arts				
It's always the same people who attend the activities				
Certain communities never access the activities				
Difficulties in getting people to participate in longer term projects				
Difficulty in communication between the organisation, the participants and the artists				
There seems to be a difference between what the organisation aims to achieve and what participants want to achieve through community arts				
Other (please state)				

7. Do you think a greater knowledge and understanding of rural issues would enhance your delivery of community arts projects in rural areas?

Yes	
No	

8. Have you ever had to adapt your facilitation style or content when delivering community arts projects in rural areas?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please briefly explain:

Section 4: How the arts can support work in rural areas / future development

1. What would you consider to be the main benefits of offering Community Arts (C.A.) activities in rural areas? (please rank **up to five** in order of importance from 1-5, where 1= greatest benefit)

	Example	
Participants are more confident as a result	**1**	
C.A. bring diverse communities together		
C.A. help improve community relations		
Participants learn new skills	**5**	
C.A. help break down barriers between people		
They encourage collaborative ways of working		
They are fun	**4**	

	Example	
They increase opportunities where there wouldn't otherwise be many		
The way in which community arts projects are delivered is easily accessible to everyone		
C.A. help people get jobs (through skills, confidence building, etc)		
C.A. help promote physical and mental well-being	**3**	
Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included		
C.A. contribute to people's education and training		
C.A. is sensitive to individual needs	**2**	
C.A. work for all ages		

2. In an ideal world, what support would you need in order to provide high quality, meaningful arts projects? (please rank **up to five** in order of importance from 1- 5, where 1= most support needed)

	Example	
Better transport provision for participants to access activities	**4**	
Better Travel allowance for working in more remote areas	**5**	
Training in rural issues	**1**	
Developing a rural network for community artists		
Developing long-term Community Arts projects		
More consistent attendance of participants		
Attracting participation from more diverse groups in the surrounding communities		
Developing projects which progress one to the other and have long-term goals	**2**	
Access to high quality arts equipment		
Access to purpose built facilities	**3**	

Increased budget for arts materials		
Other/s (please state)		

A Final Word If you wish to make any additional comments regarding the questions above, please feel free to do so here:

Thank you!

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be invaluable in researching the impact of the arts in rural areas in Northern Ireland. The information gathered will be used to create a final report which will be made readily available to support the development of future arts activities in rural NI.

What will happen with the information gathered from the questionnaires?

1. Your views will be included in a published report. Please state whether you are happy to have your name attached to these, or if you would rather remain anonymous:

Either

- *I am happy to have my name included in the final report*

- *I would prefer to remain anonymous**

2. Where appropriate, CAP would like to include quotes within the final report to support the qualitative data. Please state below if you are happy to be quoted in the final report:

- *I am happy to be quoted by name*

- *I am happy to be quoted, but would prefer to remain anonymous*

- *I am not happy to be quoted**

* please tick ✓ as appropriate

After the project, interview reports will be kept on computer file for future use – are you happy for us to use the information you have provided in future research? Y / N

Signed :………………………………………………………………………

Name   :… ………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………..

Participants

Questionnaire no: Date received:

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete the following questions for the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) and the Rural Community Network (RCN). Below is a series of questions which are designed to gauge what makes a successful arts project for people who take part in community arts activities in rural areas. It is generally acknowledged that Community Arts practice outside of the main cities in Northern Ireland has received less investment than in urban areas, and it is hoped that your responses will contribute to changing this. The answers you provide will be used to write an evaluation report on how community arts can support community development in rural areas, and will be made freely available to support future funding applications and advocacy work.

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) takes the lead in the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice in Northern Ireland. CAP is an independent advocate for community arts with a mission to promote, develop and deliver community-based arts activity to affect positive change.

Rural Community Network (RCN) is a regional voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality. It is a region-wide, grass-roots organisation employing a community development approach.

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

Put simply, community art practice develops original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change. In this way, Community Arts has a different meaning to what is traditionally known as 'Art' or 'Performance'.

We would really like to find out what YOU think and feel about community arts, what the issues are in rural areas, and if you think that arts activities can help to address any of these. The more

information you can give us, the more relevant the report will be. Therefore, please feel free to be as honest as possible – all responses will be treated in confidence. Your experience will be invaluable in improving future provision for projects in rural areas. Your responses and the resulting report will also be used to provide evidence for funding bodies, and how funding can be used to bridge current gaps in rural Northern Ireland.

There will be an opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to state whether or not you would be happy to have a named or anonymous quote included in the final report.

1) **Travel / location / distance from group?**
2) **Relationship with organization (how long involved, etc) and others in the group**
3) **Experience of community arts activities**
4) **Benefits of taking part**
5) **Things that prevent you taking part**
6) **Future activities**
7) **How can community arts make a difference (in rural areas)?**

Section 1: *About you*

1. Name:
2. Are you: Male / Female (delete as appropriate)
3. Please indicate your age:

5-11	
12-15	
16-25	
26-49	
50-64	
65+	

4. Have you ever taken part in activities with the following groups?:

If so, please tick ✓ all that apply

Ethnic minorities	
Disabled people	
LGBT	
Older people	
NEETS	

Unemployed people	
Ex-prisoners	
Other (please specify – eg young teenage mothers, etc	

5. Please state the village / town you live in, and the postcode

6. How far do you travel to get to the project you currently take part in? (please tick one)

Less than 5 miles	
5-10 miles	
More than 10 miles	

7. How do you usually get to the project you currently take part in?

On foot	
By car	
Get a lift with someone	
By bus	
By bike	
Other (please state)	

8. Have you ever taken part in any of the following?

Cross community arts projects	

Inter-generational community arts projects	
Multi-cultural community arts projects	

Section 2: About your area

7. What is the main (60%+) perceived community background of people in your area?

Nationalist	
Unionist	
Other	

11. What do you think are the most challenging issues facing people in rural areas? (please tick ✓ all that apply):

	Very challenging	Somewhat Challenging	Not at all challenging	Not sure
Social isolation				
Access to services				
Sectarianism				
Community relations				
Youth Unemployment				
Unemployment in general				
Poverty				
Racism				
Lack of opportunities in education and training				

Lack of opportunities in re-training				
Lack of opportunities in general (please expand)				
Other (please state)				

12. What other community arts activities and groups do you take part in on a regular basis? (please list them)

Section 3: Your experience of *Community Arts* Activities

4. How much experience do you have of participating in *Community Arts* activities over the past five years (see introduction on page 1 for definition of Community Arts)?

I have been involved in: please tick ✓ all that apply

5+ projects	
Less than 5 projects	
zero projects **(please go to Section 4)**	

5. Please indicate the type of Community Arts activities you have attended (please tick ✓ all that apply)

Literature and Verbal Arts (inc poetry)	
Fashion	
Drawing/ Painting	
Sculpture	
Murals	
Mosaic	
Film-making, animation	

Dance	
Drama	
Music	
Photography	
Circus skills	
Carnival arts (mask and costume making)	
Craft (inc sewing, knitting, crochet)	
Traditional arts (inc music, dance, craft)	
Drama and theatre	
Other (please specify)	

4. Which statement best describes how often you take part in Community Arts activities?

(Please tick✓)

Once a week	
More than once a week	
1-3 times a month	
5-10 times a year	
Less than 4 times a year	
Occasionally / for one off events	

12. Have you ever taken part in Community Arts activities for the following reasons? (Please indicate to what extent if at all)

	Frequently	Occasionally	Have never considered	Would never use for this
Working towards a particular event				
Activities were offered for free				
To develop new skills (eg communication skills, skills related to a particular job, etc)				
To address a particular issue (eg poverty, social isolation, racism)				
To meet people from different backgrounds				
To socialise and make new friends				
To get a qualification / as part of my education				
To try something new				
To explore a particular issue (eg a social or political issue)				
To take advantage of an opportunity on offer				
As a team building exercise				
To help foster a sense of community				
To develop my self-confidence				
To develop myself as a person				
Other (please state)				

13.   Do you (or your family/a parent) pay to take part in activities? (please tick ✓)

Never	
Sometimes	

Most of the time	
Always	
Prefer not to say	

14. Have you ever produced anything as a result of taking part in community arts projects?

(please tick ✓ any that apply)?

Exhibition	
Music CD	
Film	
Artwork produced for the community	
Performance	
Other (please state)	

15. What would you consider to be the main benefits Community Arts (C.A.)?

	Very much agree	Agree somewhat	Don't agree	Not sure
I am more confident as a result of taking part				
I get to meet people from diverse communities				
C.A. help improve community relations				
I get to learn new skills				
C.A. help break down barriers between people				
They encourage collaborative ways of working				

They are fun				
They increase the range of activities I get to take part in				
They are easily accessible to everyone				
C.A. help people get jobs (through skills, confidence building, etc)				
C.A. help promote physical and mental well-being				
Through participation and engagement in C.A. people are socially included				
C.A. contribute to people's education and training				
C.A. is sensitive to individual needs				
C.A. work for all ages				
C.A. can help to change our surrounding communities				

16. What (if any) difficulties have you experienced with arts activities?

	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Not difficult	Not sure
Activities I've been involved with lack adequate resources				
There isn't adequate transport to get to activities				
Activities aren't at convenient times				
People who run the activities don't know much about the arts				
People who run the activities aren't enthusiastic				
Artists who run the activities don't know much about rural issues				
Activities are expensive				
The venue for activities isn't always suitable				
I don't seem to find out about activities on time				
Projects don't happen over a long enough time-span.				

I don't like activities which are issue based				
I want to be able to learn more through arts acitivies				
Activities aren't well organised				
Other (please state)				

17. Do you get to give feedback and say what you think about the arts activities on a regular basis? Y/N

If so, how often?

Weekly	
After every workshop	
Monthly	
More than once per project	
Once per project	
2-6 times a year	
Once a year	
Less than once a year	

Section 4: Provision of Future Arts Activities

9. Would you be interested in taking part in future Community Arts activities? Y/N (if No, please read the section 'A Final Word' at the end of the questionnaire)

10. What would the main obstacles be for you in accessing Community Arts activities?

	Major obstacle	Minor obstacle	No obstacle	Not sure
Lack of public transports				
The organisations where activities are held don't have adequate facilities				
Not knowing where you can find out about activities				
Not having access to the internet to find out about activities				
Not knowing anyone else who is going along to an activity				
Activities are too expensive				
I don't have the time				
Activities aren't at a suitable time				
Other (please state)				

11. Do you think the arts can be used to address real issues in rural areas?

Yes	
No	

Please briefly explain your answer

12. In an ideal world, what would need to improve in order to take part in high quality, meaningful arts projects?

	A lot of improvement	Some improvement	No improvement	Not sure
Better transport to and from activities				

Having more knowledgeable artists to run activities				
Being involved with a project for a longer period of time				
Getting to know other people taking part before the project begins				
Having activities closer to where I live				
Having activities provided for free				
Having better public transport to get to activities				
Having better quality arts equipment for projects				
Having a better space for activities to take place in				
Better access to high speed broadband				
Other (please state)				

A Final Word

If you wish to make any additional comments regarding the questions above, please feel free to do

so here:

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your answers will be invaluable in
researching the impact of the arts in rural areas in Northern Ireland. The information gathered will

be used to create a final report which will be made readily available to support the development of future arts activities in rural NI.

What will happen with the information gathered from the questionnaires?

1. Your views will be included in a published report. Please state whether you are happy to have your name attached to these, or if you would rather remain anonymous:

 Either

- *I am happy to have my name included in the final report*

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- *I am happy to be quoted, but would prefer to remain anonymous*

- *I am not happy to be quoted**

* please tick ✓ as appropriate

After the project, interview reports will be kept on computer file for future use – are you happy for us to use the information you have provided in future research? Y / N

Signed :……………………………………………………………………………

Name   :………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………………………………..

Group questions:

- What do you get out of community arts activities?
- What do you enjoy/find good?

- What could be improved / make the experience better
- What would stop you coming?
- Would you want to take part in future activities?
- Why?
- Can you say something about - friendships / what difference it makes to you if you can or can't take part in community arts activities / how you find travelling to activities / if anything has changed for you since you started coming to the group
- How far do you travel to get here? Who do you travel with? How long does it take to get here? How do you communicate with others in the group / with the organization?
- How can community arts make a difference (in rural areas?)

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EXPLORING CHANGE:

ARTS PROVISION AND COMMUNITY ARTS IN RURAL NORTHERN IRELAND