

Culture & Creativity

EU-Eastern Partnership Programme



INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Education and internal mobility: joint social projects
education + culture, opportunities for young people:
work in other regions, training, retention of young
people in cities, art residencies.*



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Introduction

Social as well as individual development takes place in certain cultural context, it is affected by culture and it affects culture. There is constant mutual interaction between culture and social development, whether it is prearranged and carefully designed or spontaneous and unintentional. The evidence of cultural impact on social development can be found in many different areas of social life. Starting from early childhood education, when art and culture play a crucial role in developing young children's creativity, basically through all levels of formal and informal education, ending with intergenerational and lifelong learning programmes. Very often culture is being used as an interface and tool to reduce social and economic differences while working with disadvantaged communities. Culture is able to create empathy, empower marginalised communities and promote active citizenship, as well as building civil society. Arts and culture contribute to all kinds of creative partnerships that are established between culture and other sectors such as business, science, or the public health sector. Arts and culture can both build a supportive environment for people to have a sustainable and diverse life in cities by creating a number of various self-development possibilities, capabilities for spending free time, as well as being responsible, directly and indirectly, for the creation of work opportunities. Culture increases the mobility of people. For many artists and culture professionals, mobility has become intrinsic to their career development. Artistic residency programmes play an important role in facilitating artists' ability to move around the world. Mobility promotes dissemination of fresh ideas and values, understanding of other cultures and traditions, as well as mutual learning. Artistic residency programmes have a significant influence on developing surroundings and local community. These are all values that have never been as important as today, when Europe is facing unprecedented value crises. Therefore the impact that culture can have on social development should be recognized as a part of the solution to the many local and global challenges.

CASE 1

SPARK - Arts & Business Collaboration

Context

Leitrim, in Ireland, is the 26th largest of 32 counties by area and the smallest by population, with almost 32 000 inhabitants. Leitrim County officials has long recognised the key role the arts play in society and how the arts can play an increasingly central role in assisting local authorities to achieve their objectives. Leitrim County Council, in a move towards integrated planning, has taken a look to support the development of artists and arts activities in order to achieve these objectives. These moves cover a wide range of work areas, including community development initiatives that combat social exclusion, economic regeneration, and the creation of a quality social environment. One of the County's activities, developed by the Leitrim Arts Office, is the SPARK Project. It was developed from another programme of short 3 week residencies in businesses that were designed with the sole purpose of exposing staff at those companies to artists and the practice of the arts. As it happened, the programme got really popular - artists and businesses were generally very positive towards the programme but occasionally got a benefit that was at a whole different level. It occurs that this sort of creative collaboration can bring much more benefits than just exposure of artists and the arts in general. The side effect was the engagement of artists to design, refresh, and develop business models of their peer companies.

Facts & Figures

- As the result of the Spark Project between 2012 -2015, seven artists were involved with residency programmes over a course of 6 months spending an average 2 days per week in companies.
- PhD research on the Spark Project is being conducted.
- Thanks to the programme, a number of projects have been accomplished. The latest cooperation, between artist Leo Scarff and Mohill Enterprise Centre (MCT) - whose role is to promote economic activity in the area and to train people to compete effectively in an evolving job market, particularly in information and communications technology - benefited both artist and company on the following various levels:

For the artist:

- An opportunity to develop new physical work with funding for time, materials, travel, & etc.
- A chance to demonstrate artist teaching capabilities to the local people and educational board/ MCT.
- An opportunity to hold a design exhibition and take professional photos of the new work.
- Increased online presence through the development of a social media plan for the project.
- A chance to research and write an 80 page book documenting the project and the artist's thoughts on digital fabrication and design.

For the company:

- Development of a 6 week product design course for local creatives enabling them to learn about digital fabrication processes.
- Development of a 10 week 'Design Skills' course, which ran at MCT, with a social media campaign around it and exposure to the local community.
- Designing and printing 5x A1 information panels with all the information and photos from the project - which now are exposed in the hallways and canteen areas of the centre. Very little information on the activities of the centre had been seen on the walls previously.
- Designing and creating 2 internet access points (furniture pieces with desk, storage and integrated lighting) for use at the centre. These have been hugely beneficial as no internet access points were available up to that point.
- Fablab demonstration day at MCT, funded by the project. This involved the machines from the lab being brought down for the day, set up, and demonstrated to a group of approx 60 local people, businesses, and local government representatives.
- Redevelopment of a warehouse unit for the exhibition and further use as leasable space for businesses.



I gained immensely from participation in the project in many ways. The project offered complete freedom to produce artworks based on the being present at the centre for 2 days a week. I could have produced a static artwork and hung it on the wall however my view was to create a multi-layered art, design, and craft project around digital fabrication. For 20 years I have worked in the area of digital fabrication for my own work and recently became involved in the creation of the Fablab in Manorhamilton which runs courses and offers a variety of digital design and manufacturing services. So my idea was to see how this technology could be integrated into the workings of the centre, educate the local population in digital processes and also enable me to create new work and further my own creative expression.

— Leo Scarff an artist, designer, design lecturer, consultant and exhibition curator

The Challenge

In 2012, Leitrim Arts Office decided to follow that path and decided to create a programme that may respond to the needs of artists and business representatives. The SPARK programme creates a unique possibility for creative encounters. It is aimed at artists who are interested in working in new environments and companies who are interested in collaborating with artists and promoting creativity within their organisations. In a way this is a specific kind of artists residency programme that empowers creative partnerships between arts and businesses. As part of SPARK, artists simultaneously take on the dual roles of artist and creative collaborator over the course of six months, spending an average of two days per week with the company over that period.

For SPARK, we basically invested more planning, time, and money. The project is longer, the artist are better paid and where previously what the artist actually did was somewhat immaterial, now there had to be planned results - not pre-planned, but over the course of the project, the artist had to develop a programme that carried distinct benefit to both the company and the artist. So as well as retaining or enhancing the positives for artists and staff - we want the presence of an artist and the work they do would to have a lasting impact on the business as a whole - generally in the area of an understanding of the value of creativity.

– Philip Delamere, Arts Officer Leitrim County Council Arts Office

In their role as artists, the resident is provided with the opportunity to make work inspired by the environment, materials, staff or working practices of a company. This provides the opportunity to explore different methods of working, new influences, and to produce art in a unique context. Artists are not necessarily expected to make work collaboratively; the artist is rather making work for a period of time in a different place of work than usual. Quite naturally however, the work is clearly influenced by the adopted environment, relating strongly to that context, thus providing a greater interest and involvement in the work from staff.

In their role as creative collaborator, the artist can propose new and different creative and innovative paths, and serve as a catalyst for new thinking within companies. The artist can address areas where benefit to the company could accrue, such as developments within existing or new products or services; developments within staff interrelations; adoption of new attitudes towards creativity in the workplace or adoption of new attitudes towards service users, customers, or wider society.

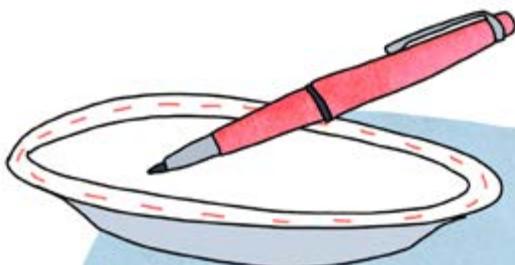
From the outset, or as the project progresses, these two strands may start out, or merge into one single programme or line of enquiries, which serves both the needs of the artist and the needs of the company.

Results and Impacts

SPARK responds directly from within a company, developing a platform for creative collaboration appropriate to that context, providing alternatives to the current view, and making connections and linkages where they may not have existed previously. SPARK takes from international models of best practices that have shown that there is a real demand not only of companies needing creativity, but also of artists wanting to interact in broader fields than strictly within their artform. The programme is important for developing ideas about creativity and the exchange should carry equal benefit for both parties.

As to numbers, for the first two years of SPARK, even though we didn't have much resources, we organised two residencies per year. This was to get a broader range of companies from different sectors involved quickly. Now that that's done, we're doing one per year, which is much more manageable and affordable for us and means that we can concentrate on minding that one relationship each year.

— Philip Delamere, Arts Officer Leitrim County Council Arts Office



CASE 2

KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre – Artist Residency Programme and Cultural Education Project

Context

KulttuuriKauppila (KK) is the Art Centre based in northern Finland, in the municipality of Ii, with over 9,300 inhabitants. Ii municipality is investing strongly on the one hand in environmental technology and renewable energy, and on the other in culture and arts education, which both belong to the municipality's strategy. Ii municipality decided that taking culture and cultural education to its strategy is very important. In order to succeed and meet the goals that have been set, part of the Ii authority's strategic plan was to establish a long term partnership with KulttuuriKauppila Art Center. Their artists' residency programme has become an excellent part of international arts for the municipality.

Facts & Figures

- During the 10 years of residency programme in KK Art Center over 50 artists from 27 countries have visited and lived in Ii.
- KK activity is responsible for 70% of the positive image of Ii municipality in media (according research conducted in 2009-2012).
- KK artists - in - residence contribute to the Ii municipality Art and Education Project by conducting workshops and masterclasses.
- KK programmes are responsible for international activities in the Ii municipality as well as for the contemporary art professionalisation and know-how.
- Active town attracts new, young inhabitants, and new companies.
- Additional value added for the municipality are cultural tourism, fostering what is strong and special, and empowering the sense of community.



The Challenge

Li's innovation structure of cultural education project was between January 2012 and June 2014. During the project, created was a model for education in international art and culture in the municipality. When launching the project, it was not a sudden awakening to art and cultural education. Quite the contrary. There has been persistent art and cultural activity over fifteen years in developing the administration of art and culture in Li municipality. A significant turn came in the year 2006 when the Art Centre KulttuuriKauppila was founded. Ever since, there has worked an active, international community of professional artists in Li. This all became possible because of the international artist-in-residence programme which started in KulttuuriKauppila also the same year.

KulttuuriKauppila was established in 2006 by three visual artists: Helena Kaikkonen, Sanna Koivisto and Antti Ylönen. It functions as part NGO, part municipality organisation. KulttuuriKauppila works to improve the position of visual artists in northern Finland and create international connections in the field of art.

KulttuuriKauppila runs an international artist residency, produces the Art Li Biennale and Valto Pernu Photo Marathon and provides ateliers for local artists. The centre aims to improve artist's skills, belongs to international art networks, and produces an international art-education programme for schools of Li. KulttuuriKauppila participates in cultural policy on a practical level and believes that creativity is a key to well-being on both the individual and collective levels.

Results and Impacts

The Residency Programme

The international artist residency programme is the main activity of KulttuuriKauppila. During its 10 years of activity, more than 50 artists have participated in the programme. The programme is tailor-made in terms of time frame - artists can stay between 2-4 months and until the final outcome. The Center provides artists with studio and living premises. Artists are also encouraged to be a part of the Art Education Programme - master-classes and workshops in local schools, as well as to interact with the local community.

We always encourage artists to do the kind of activities that are an interaction with local people. We have three studio artists in the other building, these are local artists. We all the time organize open days, different kinds of happenings, people can come and visit. The most important is Art Li Biennale - environmental and public biennale where main activity is the 10 days workshop with artist during which they, together with local people create an art projects.

– Brinon Merja Executive Director

The Cultural Education Project

It's been a special experience to be actively involved in the local art scene and we are very proud of cooperation we made within Hamina elementary school, sculptor Antti Ylönen as well as Liminka Art School, Oulu University of Applied Sciences and Oulu City Art Museum where we held lectures about our work and contemporary art in our country. In particular it was a pleasure working with

local youngsters during our art class and we hope we managed to convey our knowledge and experience.

– Milica Milićević and Milan Bosnić. Serbian Residency Artists

The innovation structure of culture education is a comprehensive learning environment of visual arts including these five levels:

- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: On every 3rd class in the schools of li will be an art project integrated to basic school lesson led by artist and teacher together.
- UPPER LEVEL OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL: Integrated art class led by artist and art teacher together. The aim is to create student-international artist -interaction.
- UNIQUE UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL: International art classes twice a year.

The Arts Education Project aims at further building every pupil a connection to the arts, which would be carried through school years, from preschool to upper secondary school. In every school in the municipality there is an emphasis of arts education. Offered all year round, there is an opportunity to take part in workshops of arts education in schools or in youth centres for every pupil in the commune.

The immediate target group of the project are the teachers, adult educators, professional artists and other cultural professionals. And therefore the project organizes further education for the teachers. The purpose of this further education is:

- to inspire and encourage teachers about the possibilities of arts and to offer new teaching models of how to apply arts education in teaching of different subjects.
- to strengthen the knowledge and skills of visual arts, with the guidance of international artists.

li municipality authorities believe that art is, as well as science and technology, an innovative medium and learning environment, which can foster creativity and international communication. That is why they have planned to develop arts education as a means to foster innovative learning. With the development of new creativity promoting learning models and bringing of international arts to schools of li municipality, the project is also applying the teaching artistry method.

Recommendations

- Building on the potential of local cultural centers and institutions can benefit on many different levels. People who work there know their communities. Involving them to broader, often parallel social changing processes, is crucial. Community development initiatives can tackle social exclusion, economic regeneration, and be responsible for creation of a quality social environment.
- Creating a long term strategy, setting goals and following them is the key. Culture due to its nature is always involved in social development, however it is important to fully benefit from its potential and this can be achieved by setting a clear path to follow.
- Being not afraid to experiment and fail. Most likely failure will happen, but experimentation can lead to unexpected findings that can be also useful, so keep your mind open.
- Creating conditions and supporting cultural-based cross-collaboration (culture + education, culture + business, culture + health) can impact society on many different levels.
- Developing art residency programmes is the long term investment that can bring a major change to the local community.

Additional Resources

KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre

<http://www.kulttuurikauppila.fi/news/>

Interview with the SPARK art-in-residency artist Monica Flynn

<https://joannelaws.wordpress.com/2014/09/11/interview-monica-flynn-the-cafe-society-visual-artists-ireland-septemberoctober-2014/>

Leitrim County Council - SPARK Project

<http://www.leitrimcoco.ie/eng/Community-Culture/Arts/Programmes/Spark/>