

SUPPORTING CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT IN OLDER AGE



Creative Initiatives that Support Older
People's Health and Wellbeing

Foreword

Creative Ireland is an ambitious whole-of-government programme putting creative participation at the heart of communities throughout Ireland. The value of creative engagement for all age groups is well recognised. For older age groups, creativity can be a pathway to social engagement, intellectual stimulation, personal fulfilment and increased physical activity, as demonstrated in some of these projects.

The *Supporting Creative Activity in Older Age* initiative came about as a result of engagement between the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport and Age Friendly Ireland. We wanted to identify innovative ways to stimulate older people to engage with their creative side, with the ambition to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for older people. Ireland’s population is ageing. Creative activity, especially group activities, is a wonderful mechanism to support older people to engage with their peers and feel part of their communities.

As a member of the National Advisory Group for Age Friendly Ireland, I recognise that collaboration and listening to the voice of older people are fundamental principles of the Age Friendly movement. The process used to design and deliver these projects was very much based on co-design with older people, harnessing the knowledge and lived experience of older people to shape the supports and services available to them.

The six regional creative initiatives described in this report align well with the World Health Organisation’s framework for the development of Age Friendly Communities, and particularly so with the domains of social inclusion, social participation, civic participation, information and communication, health and community supports. They also align closely with the principal ambition of the Creative Ireland Programme, which is to ensure that every person in Ireland has the opportunity to realise their full creative potential. They are powerful examples of how working together to create something new can have lasting positive impacts on the participants, and generate new learning for agencies and creative practitioners.

Tania Banotti

Director, Creative Ireland Programme

Department of Culture, Communications and Sport

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the delivery of six bespoke regional creative initiatives for older people delivered by Age Friendly Ireland in 2022 with funding from the Creative Ireland Programme. The context for this collaborative work was a response to findings from research by the Irish longitudinal study on ageing [TILDA] which underscored the positive impact of creative activity on older people’s health and wellbeing.

Each initiative was co-designed with older people based on consultation sessions organised in early 2022. A call for expressions of interest from creative partners led to the selection of suitable delivery partners in each region, responding to the issues and themes identified in the consultation sessions. The six initiatives were supported by Age Friendly Ireland’s regional programme manager in their respective regions:

<div><div>North</div><div>47 older people participated</div><div>Poetry and straw workshops and a modern day pageant exploring the history and culture associated with St Brigid in preparation for the new bank holiday St Brigid’s Day.</div></div>	<div><div>West</div><div>215 people participated</div><div>A Travelling Roadshow of music and songwriting sessions led by a professional musician that engaged older people in songwriting and exploration of proverbs.</div></div>	<div><div>South East</div><div>87 people participated</div><div>A creative response to place, exploring older people’s sense of belonging and experiences of their riverine and coastal community.</div></div>
<div><div>East</div><div>560 people participated</div><div>A series of large scale outdoor creative events linked to public/ heritage parks that offered taster programmes of creative activity.</div></div>	<div><div>Dublin City</div><div>30 people participated</div><div>A train the trainer céilí dance initiative that upskilled older people in adapted céilí dancing who in turn acted as ‘dance leaders’ in their own local area to pass on these skills.</div></div>	<div><div>Midlands</div><div>62 people participated</div><div>A music teaching residency across a range of instruments targeting older people who were lapsed musicians and wished to return to playing an instrument.</div></div>

Evidence from the evaluation survey has shown that the outcomes of these six initiatives impacted on health and well being, including increased physical activity (33%), increasing social connections (85%) and increased feelings of happiness (58%) confidence (62%). Other outcomes were the establishment of new creative groups from the projects, participation of older people in ongoing creative activity, enhanced relationships between creative partners and local government/Age Friendly Programmes, and a stimulated demand for creative initiatives among the ageing population.

Introduction

This report captures the learnings from an innovative approach to supporting older people’s health and wellbeing using a programme of creative engagement. The initiative was developed by Age Friendly Ireland using co-design sessions with Older People’s Councils across the country. It was funded by the Creative Ireland Programme in the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.

The proposal responded to findings from a TILDA study that identified positive health and well-being outcomes for older people relating to their creative engagement across a range of activities. The proposal sought to develop six bespoke regional initiatives that would be co-designed with members of Older People’s Councils and supported by a regional staff team.

Creative Ireland provided a budget of €200,000 to deliver these creative regional initiatives through the Age Friendly Shared Service in 2022.

Why focus on older people?



Internationally, populations of most countries are ageing, which means that the number of older people is increasing. The proportion of the population that is older is also increasing, which is also linked to a falling birth rate.

The World Health Organisation drew attention to this trend in 2006, setting out an international framework to support countries to prepare for the ageing of their communities. Ireland formally commenced its Age Friendly Programme in 2009 and in 2019 was recognised by the WHO as the first country in the world to be fully affiliated to their international programme across all administrative areas.

Population ageing is a welcome trend, as people are living longer due to advances in health care and quality of life. With a longer life expectancy, people have greater opportunities to work into later life, travel and enjoy their retirement. But an ageing demographic calls for a shift in how we organise society, one that recognises and adapts to the changes associated with the ageing process. Becoming an ‘Age Friendly’ society means that people of all ages are respected and valued and continue to have the same opportunities for social and economic participation for as long as they choose.

There are eight domains in the WHO’s global programme, ranging from outdoor spaces, the built environment and transport to communications, respect and social inclusion. The creative regional initiatives for older people particularly responded to the WHO domains of ‘Health Services and Community Supports’ and ‘Social Participation’ recognising the value of the arts in supporting health and wellbeing of older adults.



How Can Creative Initiatives be Age Friendly?

In the first instance, older people were consulted about the type of creative initiatives that were of interest to them, and the specific themes to be explored in the creative activities.

The creative initiatives were delivered with attention to the World Health Organisation's checklist for Age Friendly Cities and Communities*, thus ensuring age friendly considerations were built into the design of the programmes:

- Making cultural events accessible to older people
- Volunteering opportunities for older adults in arts contexts, with training, recognition and guidance for volunteers
- Choosing accessible venues for events and activities
- Activities and events that can be attended alone or with a companion.
- Affordability of activities and events
- Provision of clear information about activities and events
- Transportation considerations to support participation
- A wide variety of activities on offer to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- Consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation
- Consultation with older people in relation to the delivery of initiatives

The TILDA Research on Creative Activity in the Ageing Population



The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing [TILDA] is a nationally representative study of community dwelling adults aged 50 years older in Ireland. In 2021 TILDA launched new research called 'Creative Activities in the Ageing Population'. The research was funded through the Creative Ireland Programme by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The research assessed older people's involvement in a range of creative activities including going out to films, concerts or plays, reading books or magazines for pleasure, listening to music, radio, and doing creative activities or hobbies. It investigated how involvement in creative activities affects the health and wellbeing of older adults over a nine-year period (2009-2018) and the impact of changes in involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key findings included:

- Participation in creative activities was high among the older population, with over half of older adults reporting involvement in creative activities or hobbies at least weekly (53.5%).
- Older adults reporting the highest levels of involvement in creative activities reported the highest quality of life, and scored lowest on loneliness, depression, worry and stress measurements.
- The level of involvement in creative activities was consistent between ages 50-74 years, before beginning to decline more rapidly from 75 years and older.
- Higher educational attainment and higher income were strong driving factors for regular involvement in creative activities.
- Women were over three times more likely than men to read books, magazines or newspapers for pleasure weekly, while adults living in rural areas had lower involvement compared with those in urban areas.
- Declining vision and health, and an increase in disability impacted on participation in creative activities. This association persisted after controlling for demographic factors.
- Proportions of adults reporting high physical activity were highest among those also reporting moderate or high creative activity.
- Time spent doing hobbies, crafts or puzzles increased among older adults during the first COVID-19 lockdown (March to November 2020). 26% of older adults reported doing hobbies, crafts or puzzles more often.

According to the researchers, these findings suggest that policies addressing lower participation levels in at-risk groups and increasing access to creative activities in the community may act as a means of improving health and wellbeing in the older population.

A partnership approach between Creative Ireland and Age Friendly Ireland

In response to the TILDA research, in late 2021 a partnership agreement was developed between Creative Ireland and Age Friendly Ireland proposed delivering the following outcomes:

- Delivery of six regionally-based creativity programmes in 2022
- Engagement with older adults in high-quality creative activity
- Co-design and co-production of creative initiatives with Older People's Councils
- Tailoring of initiatives to the needs identified in each region to build on existing capacity in the region
- Building in sustainability beyond 2022
- Supporting the uptake and participation of groups more at risk of social disadvantage
- Reflecting the diversity of communities in the participation and outputs of the programme



Age Friendly Ireland

is a local government shared service that manages the national Age Friendly Programme, affiliated to the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities. The Age Friendly Programme aims to equip society for the rapid population ageing that is taking place and to support services and the built environment to be prepared to accommodate a larger proportion of older people who have diverse and changing needs across the lifecourse. The shared service is hosted by Meath County Council and supports a national network of 31 local age friendly programmes. Each local programme is co-ordinated by local government and involves multisectoral partners from the public, private, NGO and academic sectors.



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



Creative Ireland

is a five-year programme, managed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, which connects people, creativity and wellbeing. This all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme inspires and transforms people, places and communities through creativity. The Creative Ireland vision is that every person in Ireland should have the opportunity to realise their full creative potential. The programme was established in 2017, developing from the Ireland 2016 centenary initiative of the 1916 Rising. It draws inspiration the thousands of culture-based events exploring issues of identity, community, culture, heritage and citizenship. Through partnerships with local and national government, cultural and enterprise agencies and local enterprise, Creative Ireland now creates pathways and opportunities for people and communities to unlock their creative potential. The Programme is built around key themes: Creative Youth, **Creative Communities**, Creative Places, and **Creative Nation**.

01

Dublin City Region



Munster Academy of Irish Dance

Founded in 1997, Munster Academy of Irish Dance (the Academy) is a Limerick based organisation specialising in the co-development of, and facilitator training in, bespoke adaptive Irish céilí dance programmes. The Academy endorses the Arts and Creative Charter for Older People and the CARA/Sport Ireland Inclusion Disability Charter. Its ethos, therefore, is one of inclusivity in which all are welcome to participate regardless of their age, experience, physical, cognitive, or intellectual ability, and confidence. Sample ‘first-of-a-kind’ adaptive Irish céilí dance programmes developed by the Academy include Céilí Recall® for older people; ‘Reels on Wheels’® for wheelchair users; and ‘Some Dance to Remember’® for people living with dementia.

Using adaptive Irish céilí dance as the primary vehicle, other creative outputs can be generated on our bespoke programmes and include, for example, story exchange activities, animation creation and the production of artwork. All creatives in the Academy are qualitative/quantitative dance and social researchers and are affiliated with the Social Sciences ConneXions Research Institute at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS).

- **Carmel McKenna**
Principal; Creative Director (New Programme Development);
Irish Dance Educator/Choreographer/Historian/Qualitative Researcher.
- **Jennifer Moran Stritch**
Thanatologist; Narrative4 Story Exchange Facilitator; Principal Investigator Loss and Grief Research Group (Social Sciences ConneXions Research Institute – TUS); Qualitative Researcher.
- **Daisy Houghton**
Research Assistant and IT Support; Specialist in Venngage (infographics) and Doodly (proto-animation) software; Quantitative Researcher.

Organisation

Munster Academy of Irish Dance

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Céilí Recall

Céilí Recall is an adapted céilí initiative that was delivered in the Dublin City region in 2022. Nine 'train the trainer' style sessions were delivered adaptive Irish céilí dance for older people. Approximately 30 older people participated in the train the trainer programme who in turn acted as 'dance leaders' to pass these skills to older people in their own communities.

Training resources were developed as part of the initiative including video resource of the Irish dances, a bespoke instructional handbook on adaptive céilí dance for older people and a list of free céilí music resources was created and included in the handbook. A 'Céilí Mór' or 'grand céilí' took place in Dominick Street Recreation centre on 19th October 2022. Other features of this initiative included story exchange and animation.



Outputs from Céilí Recall

- Handbook of adapted céilí developed (hard copy and PDF versions)
- Video resources participants dancing adaptive céilí dances compiled
- An additional video of céilí dance footwork and timing was recorded, edited and shared
- Three story exchange/managed conversations were conducted with programme participants. Two sessions were audio recorded and transcribed. A thematic analysis of the transcriptions was conducted and formed the basis on which the Doodly animation was developed.
- A 'Doodly' animation captured the essence of the creative initiative from the participants' perspective and provides an understanding of the role that dance has played and continues to play in the lives of the programme participants.
- An artwork featuring the dancing feet of programme participants was created during the initiative and presented to Age Friendly Dublin City Council on 19th October 2022.
- Certificates of achievement (for those who attended four or more training sessions) and certificates of attendance (for those who attended three or less training sessions) presented to programme participants at the Céilí Mór event on 19th October 2022.

Outcomes from Céilí Recall

- A pool of older people who are trained in facilitating adaptive Irish céilí dance for older people is now available in the Dublin region.
- These facilitators can now establish Adaptive Céilí Clubs for Older People in their local communities.
- Three such Clubs have been established by programme participants as follows:
 - a) One in Glasnevin, weekly on Tuesday mornings.
 - b) Two in Cabra, one running weekly on Thursday evenings as an intergenerational activity and one running once per month in a local care home.
- Potentially, three other Clubs could be established – in Phibsboro, Navan Road and East Wall (discussions ongoing).
- A network and community of older adult adaptive céilí dancers and instructors are now supporting each other in establishing, maintaining and supporting the Adaptive Céilí Clubs for Older People.
- Ongoing mentorship is being provided by Munster Academy of Dance via email and telephone to those participants who have set up Adaptive Céilí Clubs for older people in their local communities.
- A Céilí Recall Reunion is planned provisionally whereby Céilí Recall participants will take part in an intercultural, intergenerational adaptive céilí in Limerick.

Five Lamps Theatre

The Five Lamps Arts Festival is a community based team working year round with local people and professional artists to put culture, creativity and diversity at the heart of the north east inner city’s regeneration. Founded in 2007, the festival has grown to become a centre for the creation and presentation of locally relevant, artistically ambitious works and is a highly regarded and much-loved part of the community. The team has an inclusive ethos, believing that everyone should be able to experience and participate in arts and creativity.

Organisation

Five Lamps Theatre

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The Cloudspotter Play

The Cloudspotter, by Michael J. Harnett, is a play about Nan, a grandmother with early signs of dementia and Thomas, her wayward grandson, who live together in an inner-city flat near the Five Lamps. Nan’s condition is worsening. She loses her phone and glasses, puts an empty kettle on the gas, and leaves the front door open. Her situation isn’t helped by Thomas, his mitching from school, his brushes with the law, and his unending excuses about his behaviour. But despite everything, Nan and Thomas are close, a relationship which grows even stronger when the estranged family, in the guise of another daughter, Annie, attempts to put Nan into a home after she is found wandering the street in her pyjamas. But Thomas won’t hear of it. The Cloudspotter is a play about relationships that span generations, about how circumstances forced a woman in her seventies to adjust and take over the rearing of her daughter’s child.



From
8th to 25th
November

TUE to FRI
11 AM

THE CLOUD SPOTTER

by Michael J. Harnett

directed by Vinnie McCabe

starring by Deirdre Monaghan, Brenda Brooks and Callum Maxell

venue **Clasac** The Clasac
This theatre is located on Allie Byrne Road in Clontarf, opposite the East Point Business Park entrance and a short walk from Clontarf Dart Station.

booking marcela@fivelampsarts.ie
raisinlanernan@fivelampsarts.ie



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Outputs from the Five Lamps



The Cloudspotter play was performed at the Clasac Theatre for three-weeks from 8th to 25th November 2022.



1,245 students from 14 schools and about 300 older people from various Daycare Centres, age friendly groups and individuals came to see the play with family and friends.



Facilitated post-performance discussions took place about issues raised in the drama.

Outcomes from the Five Lamps



Opportunity for younger and older audiences to engage with the topic of dementia in a theatre setting

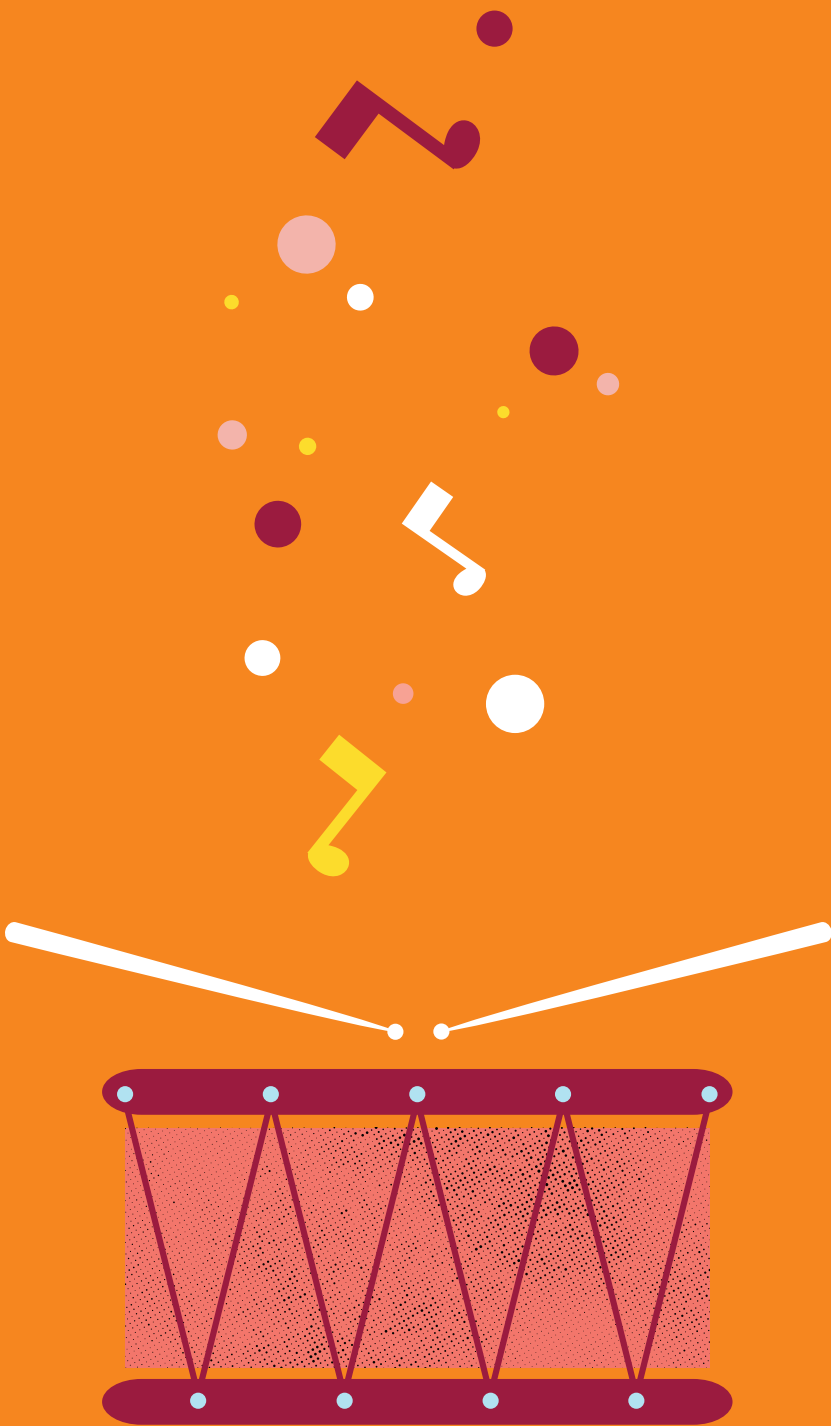


Opportunity to explore intergenerational relationships



Topics such as dementia, loneliness and the taboo subjects associated with getting older were explored

02
West
Region



Music Alive

MusicAlive was established in 2009 by musicians Kevin O' Shanahan and Caoimhe Conlon, with the aim of providing high-quality interdisciplinary arts and health projects in mental health and older age contexts. Kevin and Caoimhe had participated with Waterford Healing Arts Trust in a 2006, 'Music in Hospitals/ European Exchange programme.' This project was led by Musique et Sante (France) whose practitioner led approach partly inspired what would become MusicAlive.

Drawing on what they had learnt during the European exchange programme, MusicAlive set out with the aim of initiating sustainable creative projects with partner healthcare and arts organisations.

MusicAlive have facilitated and managed professional participatory arts initiatives primarily in the County Cork region. They have also provided mentoring/advice to other musicians developing projects around the country, particularly in Waterford, Wicklow and Wexford. Their work is informed by The Participatory Arts Practice in Healthcare Contexts – Guidelines for Good Practice (The Arts Council, HSE/WHAT 2010):

- Participants come first
- A responsive approach
- Upholding values
- Feedback and Evaluation
- Good management and governance

The concept of 'co-production' or co- design/collaboration with participants is also at the heart of the work of MusicAlive.

Organisation Music Alive

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🌐 www.musicalive.ie



The Road of Life: A Travelling Roadshow of Music and Songwriting

The Road of Life was a 'travelling roadshow' of 16 local events that allowed older people to sample music and songwriting. Musician Ger Wolfe travelled around 8 counties in the first phase of 'The Road of life', a mini tour of community venues including libraries, resource and community centres.¹ The work was primarily aimed at people in older age groups and it included people who may have mental health difficulties or were excluded from social musical activities and events.



1. The West region covers the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Galway and Tipperary, as well as the cities of Cork, Galway and Limerick



The work was aimed at bringing music to the broader community, to increase accessibility and inclusion. The idea was a pilot project of ‘Taster sessions’ to see what interest there would be in encouraging musical participation in a number of areas of music. These included group singing activities (with songs from a number of genres and eras), re-discovering a forgotten instrument skill, looking at a new instrument (in this case the tin whistle) and a brief introduction to exploring song-writing through the use of a book ‘Benign and Beautiful’, which features proverbs in both Irish and English alongside beautiful photographic imagery.

The sessions ran as workshop type events where an initial song session (50 minutes approx.) was followed up with a short tin-whistle crash course, then looking at inspirational ideas for song writing from the book ‘Benign and Beautiful’, discussion of proverbs in general, how they are paired with photos in the book and encouraging a creative response through use of poetry, prose and song.



“The primary goal I had in mind was that people would feel comfortable to participate in and enjoy music in a social setting and would go home inspired in some way to make use of music and enjoy it as the powerful and transformational and even healing force that it so often can be.”
— Ger Wolfe, Musician

Outputs

The outputs from the project included:

The numbers who participated in each session are as follows:

Location	Total number of Attendees
Limerick City	10
Newcastlewest, Co Limerick	9
Ballinasloe, Co Galway	13
Roches Buildings Cork City	16
Garranebraher, Cork City	16
Millstreet, Co Cork	18
Bandon, Co Cork	12
Shannon, Co Clare	6
Ennis, Co Clare	10
Westside Resource Centre, Galway City	15
Oughterard, Co Galway	29
Tralee, Co Kerry	12
Killorglin, Co Kerry	13
Ballybane Resource Centre, Galway City	10
Nenagh, Co Tipperary	6
Clonmel, Co Tipperary	20
Total	215



215

older people took part in songwriting and music sessions (16 sessions across 8 local age friendly programme areas).



A creative legacy: Musician Ger Wolfe composed and recorded two co-produced songs. The work on the songs started within each of the groups as 'sketches' and was completed after the 16 sessions outside of the groups. A number of guest musicians were invited to add additional instrumentation/complete the songs, to as high a standard as possible. A professional audio & video recording was made of the songs which was uploaded online and made available to all the group locations as the creative legacy of the project. These songs took inspiration from some ideas suggested by participants during the roadshow and also from the Benign & Beautiful book, gifted to participants.

Outcomes

The outcomes from The Road of Life include the establishment of trusting relationships with participants and host organisations in the various counties, with a view towards sustaining projects over the longer term. There have been significant developments in terms of MusicAlive establishing working relationships with Age Friendly Programme Managers who attended the 'taster' sessions in person and experienced, along with participants the creative interactions that can be facilitated with an experienced and accomplished artist, such as Ger Wolfe.

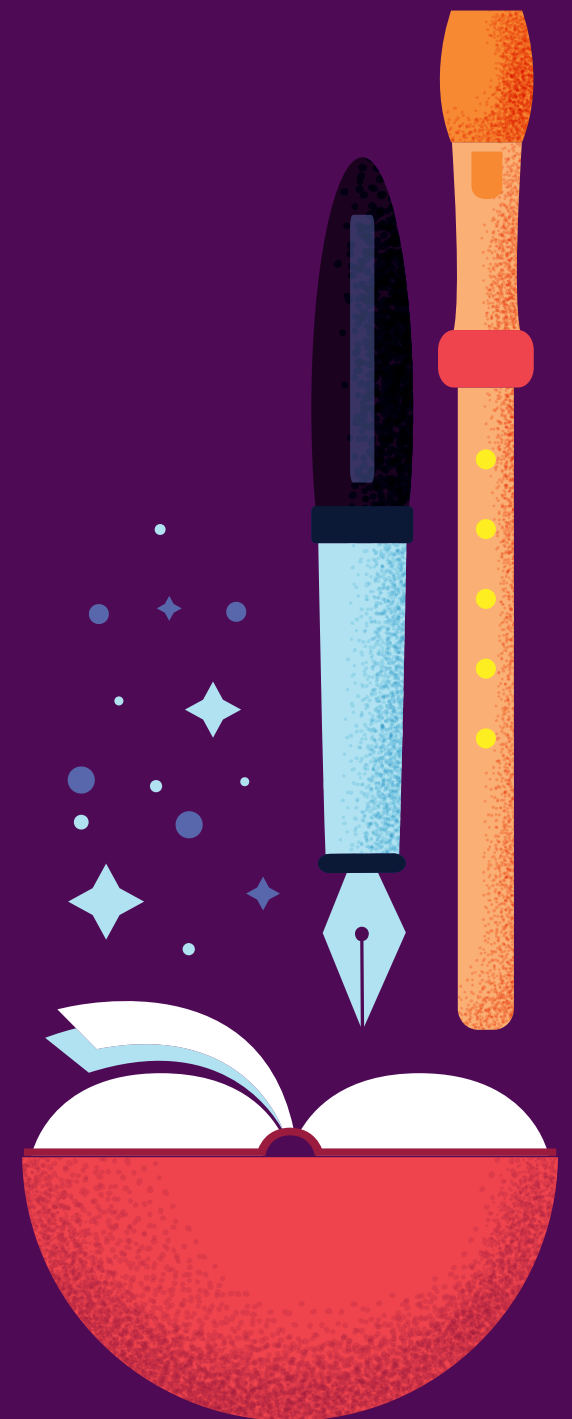
The relationship with the host organisation is one of the key pillars on which a successful project depends and some locations in particular appear well placed to host a longer-term project. The summer roadshow also allowed MusicAlive to learn in more detail of how participants would like to creatively express themselves in future projects. This feedback via the listening circle and short written evaluations provided rich learning which can inform future phases of a more sustainable and longer-term project.

Inspiring or planting the seeds with participants that they can learn more about the composition of words/melodies. The Benign & Beautiful book & the incorporation of tin whistles or other instruments (being 'dusted down' for the sessions) contributed towards the establishment of a safe creative space, where people were inspired to 'give it a go'.

The feedback from participants via the listening circle/written evaluations highlight that both the gifting of the tin whistles and Benign & Beautiful books worked very well in helping to establish relationships with participants and in the gentle encouragement of people exploring their creativity via music and the written word.

03

South East Region



Lartey Facilitation

Rachel Lartey is a professional arts facilitator based in Cork. She specialises in dialogical art projects and believes that art can be a powerful tool to give voice to those who are silenced in our community, or do not feel heard. Her projects focus on creating a platform for self-reflection and building resistance amongst marginalised groups. Over the last year she has worked with Age Friendly Ireland on a creative engagement project for older people, designed to build resilience and connection with others, following the impact of the pandemic. She has also created and delivered workshops for advocacy groups on combating self-ageism and ageism through the arts, as well as delivered a community champions leadership programme for people who feel underrepresented in their communities.

She is a qualified Arts Facilitator and Community Development Worker with 11 years’ full-time experience of working directly with older people, vulnerable groups (people living with a disability or mental health illness), community groups including hard to reach communities, (i.e. people living with disabilities, LGBTQ+, Traveller community, etc.).

She holds a post graduate diploma in Arts in Group Facilitation and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Counselling & Psychotherapy, both from Munster Technological University.

She has delivered programmes such as:

- Ageism / Unconscious Bias Training
- Community Leadership Workshops
- Raising Awareness of Rights of Older Persons
- Health & Wellbeing Initiatives



Organisation Lartey Facilitation

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A River Flows Through It: Creative Engagement With My Place

‘A River Flows Through It: Creative Engagement With My Place’ brought individuals and groups from the counties of the South-East together in an exchange of creative responses to the natural and cultural environment of their immediate riverine or coastal neighbourhood.



The project applied diverse participatory methods to support older people to spend time sharing stories, local wisdom, hopes and fears in a personally engaged manner. The initiative used a variety of creative forms including imaginative writing, drawing, painting, music and claywork as tools for active engagement and learning was a positive and valued experience for older people.

This project supported participants in the exploration of how they feel whilst connecting with nature and their creative processes around the river, as well as connecting and sharing their insights with others regarding their own and other people’s feelings, knowledge and perspectives. It stimulated older people to explore new interests such as: poetry, Irish literature, exploring and documenting different parts of the river or joining a local environmental group.

A total of 87 older people from six counties participated (Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow). The workshops featured a variety of aspects including an unfolding poem, engagement with nature, a reminiscence walk.

Outputs

- Each county in the South East region hosted a 3 day workshop (18 days of workshops in total) as set out in the table below.
- 87 older people participated across the region
- Written materials and other forms of creative work were curated after each workshop.
- Memoirs, poetry and creative work was developed during the initiative and collated into PDF format for wider circulation.
- Works from each county were displayed at the Celebration Concert on the 28th September in Carlow. This event marked the creative participation and collaboration of both participants and key stakeholders.

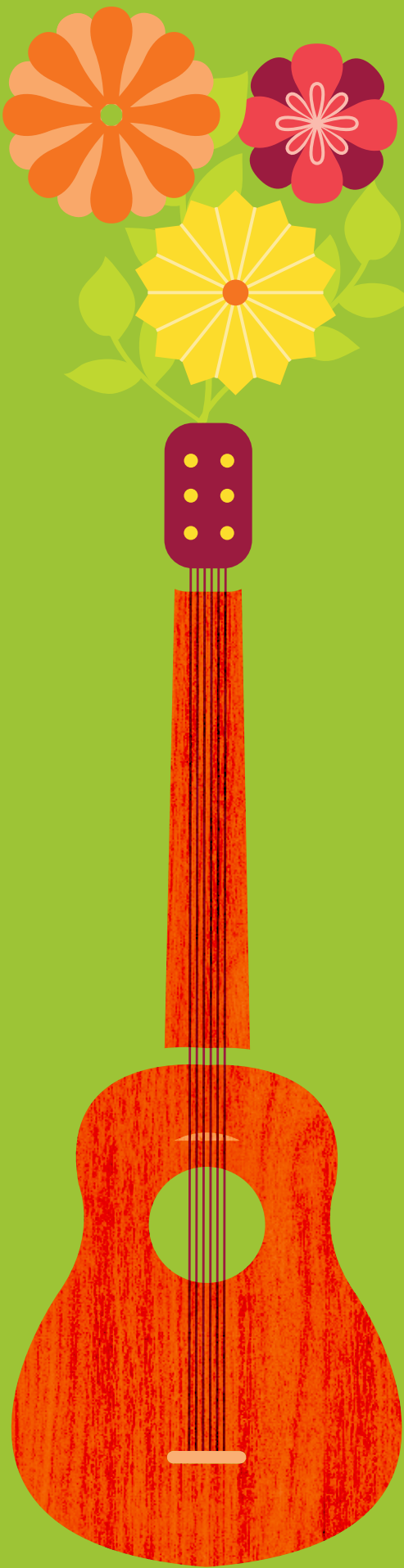
County	Dates for 3 day workshops	Confirmed Venue
Kildare	27 th , 28 th & 29 th June	Royston’s Sports and Social Club, Newbridge, Kildare, W12XT65
Carlow	4 th , 5 th & 6 th July	Dolmen Hotel, Kilkenny Rd, Mortarstown Upper, Carlow, R93 N207
Kilkenny	8 th , 9 th & 10 th Aug	Clara Community Hall, Clohoge, Co. Kilkenny
Wexford	15 th , 16 th & 17 th Aug	Grantstown Daycare Centre, Grantstown, Wellingtonbridge, Co. Wexford, Y35 D4C4
Wicklow	22 nd , 23 rd & 24 th Aug	Blessington Men’s Shed, The Old Library, Troopersfield, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Waterford	29 th , 30 th & 31 st Aug	Fusion Community Centre, 7 Strandside, Dungarvan, Waterford, X35 E161
Celebration Concert	Wednesday, 28 th September 2022 – 5pm	Dolmen Hotel, Kilkenny Rd, Mortarstown Upper, Carlow, R93 N207

Outcomes

The outcomes from the project were recorded as follows:

- **Creative engagement** - participants have continued to produce creative works and shared them with the group. They have spoken about how the process made them feel and linked this to their local environment and community. Participants joined workshop WhatsApp groups and have been sharing additional exercises and reflections after their workshop ended.
- **Social participation** – participants made new friends during the initiative and are now meeting up socially. Participants were empowered by each other to join groups in the area, for example pitch and put, women’s shed, line dancing.
- Participants exchanged contact details and planned to involve each other in community projects / social clubs.
- **Sustainability** – an active social learning process motivated people to learn more about their environment.

04
East
Region



Creative Lives

Creative Lives is a registered charity established in 1991. They champion community and volunteer-led creative activity across the Ireland and the UK, and work to improve opportunities for everyone to be creative. They celebrate and promote people expressing themselves creatively with others, recognising the benefits this can bring. Their strategic framework identifies three priorities, defined as:

- building networks and relationships to support creative participation,
- demonstrating how creative participation improves social connectedness, and
- opening up more spaces for creative participation.

After 30 years of work as ‘Voluntary Arts’, the organisation rebranded as Creative Lives in 2021. This new name, in part, aims to recognise their belief that creative activity is an important and valuable part of our lives at all ages. The organisation is at the forefront of public policy development and practice in the field of creative participation, as well as creativity and wellbeing. Over 30 years, Creative Lives has great experience in engaging with older people having been involved in the Baring Foundation’s early work in this field in the UK. They were one of the founding partners of the Luminare festival in Scotland. In 2018, they were funded by Arts Council England to work in partnership with Age UK to launch a similar festival, Age of Creativity, across England.

Organisation Creative Lives

Contact name Kelly Donaldson

 Tel: 00 44 7843 056023 (UK office)

 kelly@creative-lives.org

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 [@CreativeLivesCL](https://twitter.com/CreativeLivesCL)

 www.creative-lives.org





Autumn Medley: Taster Events

In September 2022, the ‘Autumn Medley of Creativity’ project featured a series of creative workshops and performances for older people. Funded by the Creative Ireland Programme and delivered in partnership with Age Friendly Ireland, the events took place in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin, Fingal, Louth and Meath.



Outputs

The following outputs were delivered by Creative Lives for the Autumn Medley events:



Local Authority	Approx no of Attendees
South Dublin County Council	100+
Final County Council	90+
DunLaoghaire Rathdown County Council	120+
Meath County Council	100+
Louth County Council	150+
Total	560+

Across the five events, there was a wide arrange of workshops and performances on offer including

- Ukulele music
- Flower arranging
- Music
- Drama
- Painting



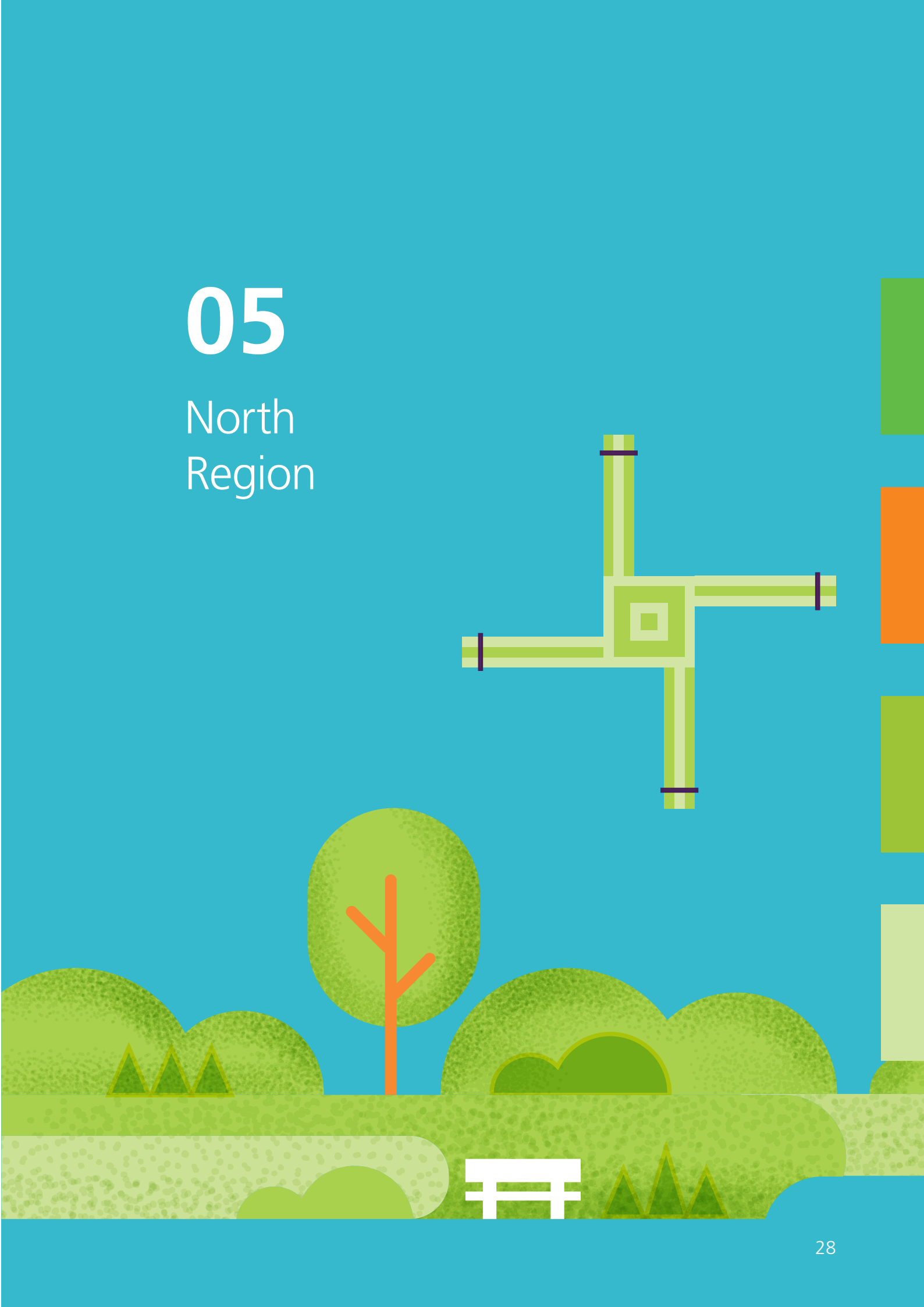
Outcomes

Sample of key outcomes from the Creative Lives events in the East region:

Dee Hub in Ardee, County Louth - a non-for-profit community resource centre. The Autumn Medley event has brought people together and ignited conversations on starting up creative groups. The Dee Hub have had requests for holding pottery classes as a result of getting a taste of it at the event. They have also had requests from older people to start groups and hold them within the centre. The centre wants to be involved in the next event should there be one.

Ashbourne Library, County Meath Since trying out the line dancing at the event, the library had set up a term of line dancing workshops with the facilitator, as there were a large amount of requests following the event. The Holistic workshop has also been requested as a regular event, and the library are in the process of working weekly sessions into their timetable of events.

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown – In conjunction with the council, the library is continuing with wreath making classes due to the high demand at the event. The Dun Laoghaire Active Retirement Association has had an increase in members as a result of being present at the event. A short film has been produced showing highlights of the events and promoting the clear benefits of creative events.



Age & Opportunity

Age & Opportunity is a national organisation that provides a range of opportunities for older people who want to get more involved in arts and culture, sport and physical activity, civic engagement and personal development.

Age & Opportunity Arts is a dedicated programme, which supports the participation and representation of all older people in cultural and creative life in Ireland. They work by supporting and resourcing artists, collaborating with art organisations and encouraging involvement in arts activities by people all over Ireland.

Age & Opportunity work comprises the annual, high profile, Bealtaine Festival which takes place throughout the month of May, through to other initiatives such as facilitated day trips to museums, galleries and other arts events (Cultural Companions), artist residencies in studio spaces and in care settings, professional development training for artists, and development initiatives for the sector.

Organisation Age & Opportunity
Contact name Ciarán McKinney, Manager of Engage Programme
Address St. Patrick's Hall, Marino Institute of Education,
Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, D09 KP46

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www.ageandopportunity.ie



Workshops Exploring the History and Culture of St Brigid

This creative regional initiative in the north region on the theme of (St) Brigid was a participatory arts project, celebrating tradition, custom and folklore related to Ireland's Brigid (Saint and Goddess), comprising:

- A series of craft and poetry writing workshops with groups of older people from six counties, happening in a hotel and community venues.
- A collective, multi-activity, pageant event, located at the National Museum of Ireland, Country Life.
- A series of activities were filmed during the pageant, to create a filmic artwork piece
- Crafted items



All six workshops took place in person, indoors and involved a mixture of Brigid inspired hand-crafted artefact making and poetry writing. Crafting happened in the mornings, followed by a provided warm lunch, and then poetry writing and reading activity in the same space in the afternoon. The majority of people attended both morning and afternoon sessions. Some participants brought written materials to the poetry writing workshops. One participant emailed Brigid research materials in advance of the workshops to share with the artist; also a poem they had written. Another person brought a long text they had written in Irish.

The dates and locations of the workshops were:

Date	Counties	Workshop Venue
Mon 26 Sept 11am – 3pm	Mayo & Sligo	Teach Laighne, Tubbercurry, County Sligo
Tue 27 Sept 11am – 3pm	Cavan & Monaghan	Errigal Country House Hotel, Cootehill, County Cavan
Wed 28 Sept 11am – 3pm	Donegal & Leitrim	St Joseph's Rockhall, Carrickboy, Ballyshannon, County Donegal

The workshops were delivered during National Positive Ageing Week in September 2022, offering a positive contextual tie-in and an opportunity for linked publicity and promotion.

The workshops were facilitated by artist Marie Brett who compiled and printed a collection of resource and reference materials to share inspiration and to inform the making process. These included photographs the artist took at the National Museum of Ireland, County Life's Brigid display cases; the Homer Sykes 1972 photographic collection / published booklet, the Duchas National Folklore Collection archive as well as further other online and printed resources.



An assortment of Brigid referenced crosses, protective God's eyes, masks, hats and the bridéog were created. All were created with the plan for them being processed by hand, outdoors referencing the traditional ritual of procession and holy pilgrimage. Visual reference to St Brigid's "Biddy Boys" were made. Many beautiful artefacts and poems were created in all of the workshops. The artist gathered and safeguarded all items to bring to the pageant. All items were labelled to ensure return to makers after the pageant. Participants and staff attended from each county except Leitrim.

Age Friendly Ireland commissioned a documentary film maker to visit a workshop to capture some of the activities. Additionally, the videographer interviewed key people about the project and their experience. A few participants read their poems and/or explained their thinking about the theme of Brigid and their creative work made, to camera. The documentary film maker visited the Cavan and Monaghan workshop which happened in Errigal Country House Hotel, Co. Cavan

Attendance Numbers



47

older people participated in this initiative across the region



11

staff members were involved directly



Link

Click here for the video of the pageant (Password: smith)

Outcomes

- Engagement of older people in workshops on theme of Brigid
- Exploration of local history and culture
- Development of a model for a celebratory pageant to mark St Brigid's Day
- Development of relationships between artist, Museum, older people and local authority
- Sharing of elder knowledge and creation of new cross-generational traditions.
- Exploration of Celtic wisdom through poetry and myth, linking the natural world learnings to the elements of fire, earth, air and water.

06

Midlands Region



Music Network

Music Network is Ireland’s national music touring and development organisation, and was founded by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon in 1986. Making high quality live music accessible to communities throughout Ireland and helping musicians to develop fulfilling careers, Music Network’s vision is that of a culture which increasingly values live music in our everyday lives, embracing it as an essential part of a healthy, vibrant society. Music Network delivers a broad range of complementary programmes including a National Touring Programme, Musician Residencies both here and abroad, Learning & Participation projects, The Music Capital Funding Scheme, Commissioning, Training Programmes and other professional development supports for musicians.

Organisation Music Network

Contact name General Enquiries – Ciarán Kilbride

Address National Concert Hall Building, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

 01 475 0224

 operations@musicnetwork.ie

 <https://www.facebook.com/musicnetworkireland/>

 @MusNetIrl

 www.musicnetwork.ie

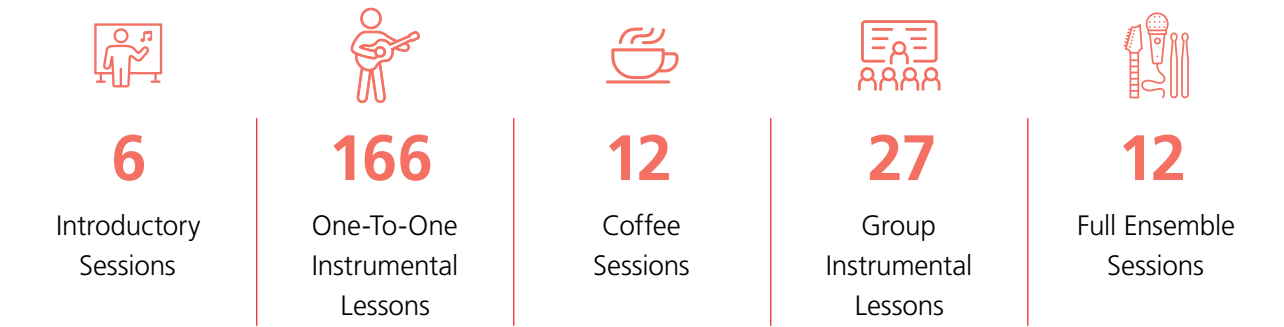




Making Music in the Midlands

Outputs

This music teaching residency recorded the following outputs:



- 62 people aged 55+ returned to music-making
- 3 participants with additional needs accommodated to study percussion with a specialist teacher as part of the Roscommon residency
- 9 instruments provided for participants who lacked an instrument
- 9 participants included in an online residency designed to cater to people unable to travel for in-person sessions
- Employment provided for 10 professional musicians
- Links forged between participants and 5 midlands venues



Outcomes

- **Improved health and wellbeing of older people:** in addition to re-engaging with music-making, participants had many opportunities to socialise, bond and build friendships which will help to reduce social isolation in the future as they continue to engage in social and musical activities in the midlands region.
- **Relationship Building:** participants have built strong bonds with each other, the professional musicians and their local venues. Important relationships between Music Network, Older People’s Councils and the five venues were established. The relationship between Music Network and Age Friendly Ireland was further strengthened by this partnership.
- **Future Music-Making Opportunities:** positive feedback from participants indicates that they wish to continue to learn, meet and play music together in the future.
- **Instrument Access:** engaging with Ballymahon and Ashbourne Libraries to arrange access to instruments for some project participants has raised awareness of this valuable resource among participants and the midlands community and also provides evidence that locally based instrument banks are a viable option to consider in relation to providing instruments for future projects of this nature. These banks are usually intended for children but instruments were made available for this project, courtesy of Music Generation Longford and Music Generation Meath.
- **Digital Skills:** as one residency programme was delivered in a digital environment, the professional musicians and participants involved developed a range of valuable skills related to working and learning in a digital environment.
- **Professional Development:** feedback from professional musicians indicates that Making Music in the Midlands provided a unique opportunity for teachers to work with older learners in both one-to-one and ensemble capacities which gave musicians valuable new insights into how older people learn and interact musically with other players, and how they respond to different teaching methods.

Public Engagement outcomes

Levels of audience engagement and participation

North 47 older people and 11 staff participated in poetry and mask/straw making workshops and a modern day pageant.	West 215 participants in 16 sessions across 8 programme areas.	South East 87 participants in 3 full day workshops in each of six counties in the region.
East 560 participants in five large scale creative happening.	Dublin City 33 participants in the train the trainer adapted céilí sessions overall (approx. 17 on any given evening). 80 at final Grand Céilí.	Midlands 62 participants learning music in one to one and group settings.

Media coverage
















Age Friendly Ireland and creative partners used various methods to publicise the initiatives. In the North, East, South East, and West regions, posters were designed and distributed locally. Social media, local authority and other websites, and newsletter correspondence were also used to reach older people in each region.

In Dublin City, the adapted céilí initiative was promoted by the Regional Age Friendly Programme Manager and a Dublin City Council Senior Community Worker through a poster and email to relevant contacts in the five local in Dublin City, as well as text messages and phone calls to networks of older people throughout Dublin.

Music Network and Age Friendly Ireland led a national and regional communications campaign to promote the initiative. Age Friendly Ireland Programme Managers and Older People’s Councils provided additional local support to raise awareness and to help recruit participants in their county. A key aim was to engage ‘harder -to-reach’ groups and communities that have been previously underrepresented in local arts participation programmes. Awareness of the project was generated throughout its duration via Music Network’s and Age Friendly Ireland’s social media channels.

The following media coverage was achieved:

	https://www.irishdancing.com/index.php/articles/articles-to-read/news-articles/1371-ceili-recall
	https://www.twilight.ie/blog/2022/07/15/three-sisters-rivers-on-the-landscape-and-cultural-heritage-of-the-region/
	https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/news/age-friendly-ireland-launches-regional-creative-initiatives-for-older-people/
	https://westmeathppn.ie/node/2369
	https://journalofmusic.com/listing/11-07-22/making-music-midlands-music-network-teaching-residency
	https://westmeathculture.ie/tag/making-music-in-the-midlands/
	https://www.midlands103.com/news/midlands-news/deadline-approaching-for-midlands-music-programme-for-over-55s/
	https://www.leinsterexpress.ie/news/local-news/864199/laois-participants-sought-for-making-music-in-the-midlands.html
	https://agefriendlyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Age-Friendly-Ireland-Newsletter_29072022-1.pdf
	https://mullingar.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Press-Release_Creative-Projects-for-Older-Adults_summer22.pdf
	https://www.wlrfm.com/lifestyle/creative-engagement-workshop-for-older-people-taking-place-in-dungarvan-this-week-266392
	https://monaghan.ie/communitydevelopment/2022/09/08/explore-the-traditions-associated-with-brigid-monaghan-county-council-age-friendly-ireland/
	https://agefriendlyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Age-Friendly-Ireland-Newsletter_30092022.pdf

	https://www.tipperarylibraries.ie/the-road-of-life-ballads-beyond-with-ger-wolfe-clonmel-library/
	https://www.healthygalitycity.ie/news/142/the-road-of-life-ballads-beyond-with-ger-wolfe-galway-city-august-2022
	https://siamsatire.com/event/the-road-of-life-with-ger-wolfe/
	https://www.artsandhealth.ie/2022/08/11/the-road-of-life-music-and-songwriting-experiences-for-older-people/
	https://www.nenaghguardian.ie/2022/08/25/the-road-of-life-at-nenagh-library/
	https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/louth_county_council/latest-news/autumn-medley-of-creativity.html
	https://www.dlrcoco.ie/en/news/general-news/autumn-medley-age-friendly-creative-activities-%E2%80%93-day-inspiring-creative-engagement
	https://www.dublinsoutdoors.ie/clondalkin-events/autumn-medley-of-creativity-for-55/
	https://www.dundalkdemocrat.ie/news/home/916546/autumn-medley-of-creativity-in-ardee-next-week.html
	https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/louth-live/916945/autumn-medley-of-creativity-in-ardee-next-week.html
	https://www.independent.ie/regionals/dublin/fingal/huge-range-of-fingal-events-planned-for-positive-ageing-week-2022-42006016.html
	https://dublingazette.com/dublinlocalmatters/dlr-festival-of-inclusion-34276/
	http://forgetmenots.ie/2022.html

Summary of the Project Evaluation

Participant Profile:

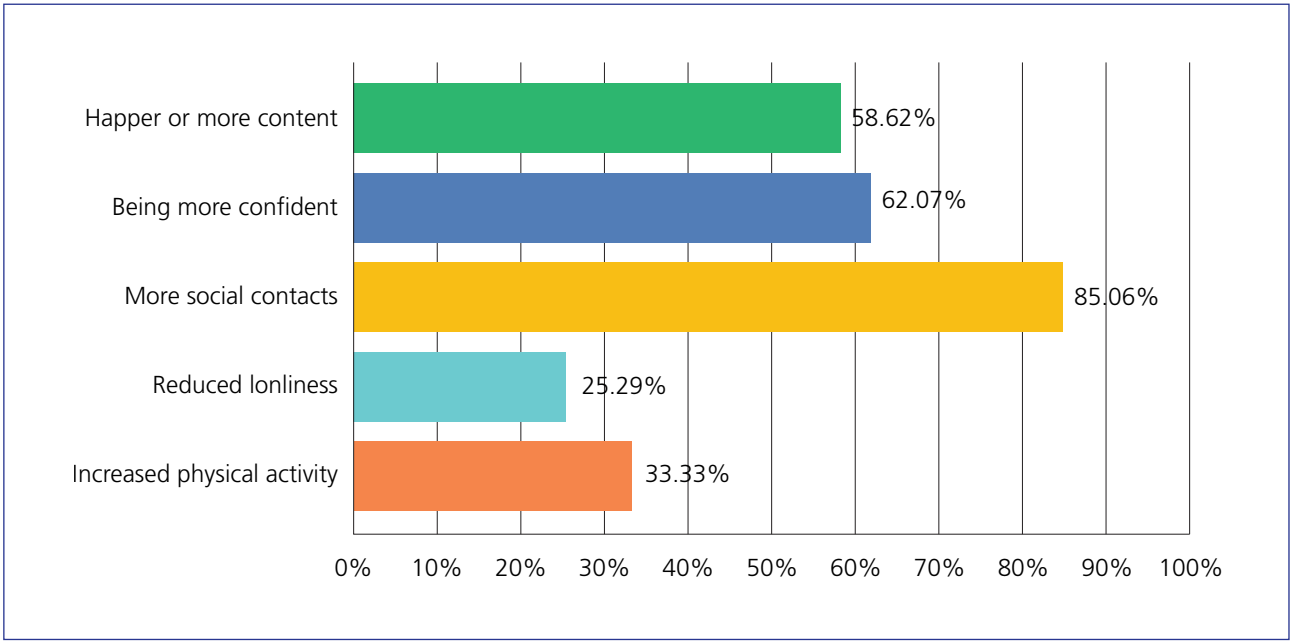
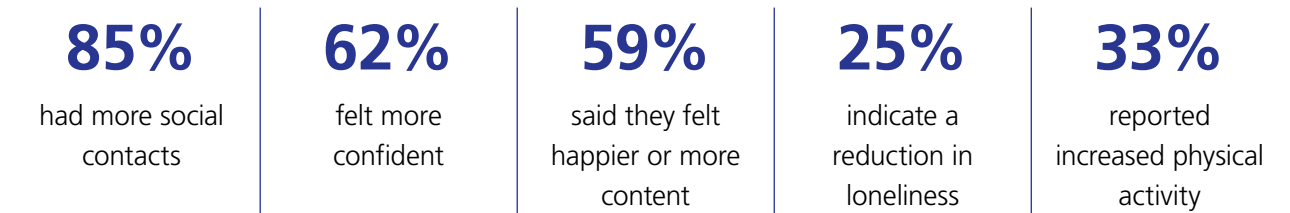
- Evaluation respondents were 75% female and 25% male
- One third of the sample (33%) were in the 50-64 age group; 49% were aged 65-74; 17% were 75 to 84; and 1% age 85-94.

Participant evaluation survey findings

The evaluation survey completed by participants indicated that:

- 87% of respondents strongly agreed they enjoyed participating in the initiative
- 78% strongly agreed that as a result of being involved in the project, they would like to participate more in creative initiatives, with a further 15% agreeing with this statement.

The initiative impacted on older participants' health and wellbeing as follows:



““

I thoroughly enjoyed the dancing, the social aspect of the classes and the fun we had each week.

““

Increased social contact with neighbours travelling together to the class. Enjoyed learning new dancing.

““

A most enjoyable day, very sociable and met lovely people. Beautiful facilitator – lovely gentle manner.

““

Learned new skill, revived memories of a different time – very social – stimulated my interest.

““

It was lovely meeting with other after the lengthy lock down.

““

Enjoyed meeting new people. Learning about St Brigid.

““

First time to make St Brigid cross, proud of myself.

““

Met new friends which has helped me to join more associations around Kilkenny.

““

As a musician I was happy to be a part of this initiative as it gave me a new challenge and goal to meet. I had played the guitar some years ago and now mainly play keyboard/piano so it provided me with an ideal opportunity to re-visit the guitar again. Jazz was a genre I really hadn't played before, so it has opened a new challenge for me.

““

Participating in this initiative has been a wonderful experience!... I have been privileged to receive the expert tuition of Catherine, who delivered the lessons in an easy step-by-step, friendly and relaxed manner. She was also so encouraging.

““

I found the whole programme very interesting, and learned basic guitar skills.



Delighted to get started playing. Realised my “fears/anxiety” were unfounded. Teacher was adaptive and supportive. Material sent was easy to understand and follow... I’ve been encouraged to develop a set list to play for others. I thoroughly enjoyed the full experience. I’ve told friends and work colleagues about the programme. Thanks very much for the opportunity.



Found it therapeutic and relaxing.



Very uplifting and fulfilling, delighted to be introduced to the guitar.



Participating in this wonderful initiative has rekindled my love of wind instruments particularly in the jazz genre. I am pleasantly surprised that with Ciaran’s expert tuition I can begin to play saxophone and continue to practice the skills and techniques he has taught me. I have a few challenges due to age but still manage to find the notes and I am working on developing a better embouchure.



I loved every minute Jacinta is a lady full of talent and understanding I would give anything to learn more from her.



The whole project has been a fantastic experience... meeting new people, learning new skills and having a goal. It has opened a new door in my life. I have enjoyed myself enormously even though I had to push myself to try.



The whole project has been a fantastic experience... meeting new people, learning new skills and having a goal. It has opened a new door in my life. I have enjoyed myself enormously even though I had to push myself to try.

Feedback on the Autumn Medley events

Testimonials:



I didn’t know there was so much available on my doorstep, it has shown me how easy it is to get involved.



Our group lost members during covid, it has been hard to get back and interested in meeting up, this has given us a reason to start up and get back to what we love.



Just listening to the music makes me feel happy and like I can get moving, even dance!



We are so grateful that this event has been put on, thank you.



I have three things to bring home from being here today, (wreath, soap, painting) there is such an array of activities.



This is our first performance since before the pandemic, thank you for the opportunity.

Feedback from The Road of Life participants:



Excellent and most enjoyable.



Really enjoyed the morning and would come back to another.



Wonderful morning, Ger was amazing.



It was so relaxed and very well presented and everyone was welcome.



Ger made everything feel comfortable and gave people opportunity and encouragement to sing/play etc especially beginners.



Very accessible, uplifting and enjoyable.



Recalling songs and bringing back great memories of past times with song/music.



Brought tears to my eyes... the songs my parents would have sang.

Feedback from Creative Partners:

The creative partners involved in the six regional initiatives made the following observations on the practical roll out of the initiatives:

- The venues used were in general suitable for the various initiatives
- The level of administrative time involved in setting up new, bespoke initiatives and the associated promotional work
- Challenge of lead in time and timing of events over the summer months



I think this phase of the project has been largely successful in reaching the goal of encouraging fun, participation and enjoyment of music in new community settings by a broad range of participants...Numbers were very good in some places but not across the board.

— Ger Wolfe, Musician



It was a joy to see all the participants' enthusiasm and positive engagement in all of the workshop activities. The workshops were a joy to be a part of. People engaged fully and confidently; there was great expression and self confidence in the rooms; many lovely creative items were created; and people were supportive and affirmative to each other's contributions. A considerable number of people gave feedback to the artist informally on leaving, how much they had enjoyed the session, how 'it was far better than I'd imagined' how they 'didn't know I'd be able for making such lovely things' and of how 'it was great fun'. — Marie Brett, Artist on the Brigid Project



It was great being able to access the spaces before the workshop (the artist arrived 45 mins to 1 hour early to set-up; and similarly worked late to tidy and clear and pack away materials. Everyone attending brought energy and enthusiasm to all the activities. The atmosphere was light, bright and fun. — Marie Brett, Artist on the Brigid Project



I found the change in the participants extraordinary in such a short space of time. Their confidence grew and they became very open and loved chatting as well as playing. As a retired music teacher, it gave me the opportunity to put into action the experience I have gained over the years and see how positive it can be in helping people of a certain age gain confidence in their own abilities. It also reminded me that some of the most simple melodies can be performed beautifully. Some participants had more musical expertise than they gave themselves credit for. — Catherine McEvoy, County Westmeath, Musician



Participants had the rare opportunity to share their musical experiences with like-minded individuals only to find that we all have similar hurdles to overcome and share common ground in terms of our own musical journeys. It has broadened my experience with older learners and given me an opportunity to understand their personal musical experiences. Every detail of the course was meticulously planned. Communication was at all times friendly and helpful leading to efficient and productive outcomes. As an artist I was always fully supported and felt that my work was valued and appreciated. — Alec O'Leary, County Laois, Musician

Feedback from Age Friendly Programme Managers and Regional Managers

Dublin City

The adapted céilí train the trainer initiative was considered ‘cost effective’ by the regional programme manager. Sustainability objectives were met because the initiative resulted in the establishment of new Irish dancing groups for older people in three areas of the city.

West Region

The Road of Life was well supported in general and feedback from participants was very positive. There were issues with numbers in some locations due to the summer holidays. The Kerry Age Friendly Programme Manager said the initiative attracted a different group of older people to the ones who typically engage with Older People’s Councils, so it has helped with broader engagement in the community. The initiative was described as ‘gentle and empathetic’- “Music Alive were wonderful to work with”. There were positive comments on musician Ger Wolfe regarding his gentle approach to engaging with older people which helped people who were reluctant to engage in their communities due to the pandemic.

Midlands region

There was positive feedback on the music teaching residency. One participant said they had been ‘yearning to play’ music again. The residency in Longford was so successful that it has been extended. People with intellectual disabilities were included in the Roscommon residency.

South East region

The initiative attracted engagement from men, some who had a recent experience of bereavement. In some areas, the arts facilitator had to put a lot of time into recruitment. Feedback from one county suggested the timeframe for delivery was an issue, and communication could have been strengthened.

North region

The workshops were ‘fantastic’ and there was great energy in the initiative. The video resource will be premiered in 2023 on St Brigid’s Day. Although it was hard to recruit for this initiative, the people who participated really enjoyed it. The approach to pair counties for the workshops meant that participants had to travel and this led to difficulty recruiting. There was some lack of interest in the project locally, perhaps due to timing because St Brigid is associated with spring. A programme manager expressed an interest in more intensive work of this nature (rather than a one day workshop) if it were to be continued. “A really good event, to be physically producing something”.

East region

Wide array of creative activities offered in large scale events. The Ashbourne event had 100 participants. Creative partners requested additional staff help on the day of the event from the local authority. The DLR event was the opening event for the Festival of Inclusion and had 200 participants (dancing, drama, wreath making, ukulele, Dance Theatre of Ireland, information stands) and was described as having a ‘lovely atmosphere’. DLR venue was over three floors and perhaps a smaller venue might be more suitable for older people. They also made use of outdoor space for dancing. Older people went home with something they had made.

Recommendations from Age Friendly Programme staff for sustainability:

- Review timing of some initiatives and give more lead in time
- Build in a budget for administration
- Make sure all counties are on board and ensure more ownership by the Age Friendly Programme Manager
- The co-ordination role was useful
- Perhaps establish a panel of creative partners that can be drawn on by individual counties
- Co-ordinate some activity internally and provide a menu of options
- Ensure Arts Officers and Creative Ireland co-ordinators are more involved

North Region images



St Brigid Pageant in the Turlough Museum, Mayo as part of the North region's creative initiative

East Region images



Autumn Medley events



Céilí Recall in Dublin City (adapted céilí)



The Road of Life songwriting roadshow



Creative response to place in the south east region



The Road of Life, travelling roadshow in the West region

Videos

<p>The Road of Life</p> <p>https://youtu.be/u-fu0gkwL34</p>	<p>Autumn Medley</p> <p>https://youtu.be/I0lls7B7Keg</p>
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Conclusion

Within the framework of Creative Ireland, and with academic reinforcement through the TILDA research, there is now a much greater understanding about the value of creative engagement for older people. Being creatively active has wider ‘knock on’ effects for the individual, with potential to contribute to many positive outcomes across multiple domains. For service providers in the ageing sector, creative initiatives therefore offer greater ‘added value’ in the potential they have for a wider and sustained impact on older people’s quality of life.

The *Supporting Creative Activity in Older Age* initiative was a wonderful opportunity to develop new creative initiatives, tailored to different geographic regions, that directly responded to older people’s interests and preferences. The variety of activity delivered demonstrates the many avenues of creative engagement that offer possibilities to support older people’s health and wellbeing.

The evaluation of this initiative showed positive findings in relation to the impact on the older participants. For instance, creative engagement resulted in more social contacts and, in some cases, more physical activity. Importantly, the majority of participants (78%) strongly agreed that they would like to participate more in creative initiatives as a result of being involved in this project. It is very welcome that there is such a strong appetite for activity of this nature.

The initiative also generated learnings for the agencies involved, particularly in relation to the timing of activities, timelines for delivery, sustainability and working with multi sectoral partners. The feedback from participants and observations from staff members and creative partners are contributing to a knowledge bank that will support the delivery of future programmes of work in this field.

Around the country, there is an abundance of creative opportunities available to older people through the local authorities and their Age Friendly Programmes, national voluntary organisations, local community groups and creative practitioners. Older People’s Councils are involved in many different formats of creative engagement, such as drama projects, storytelling, ‘creative cafes’, Bealtaine events, choirs, music and social dancing.

The value of building creative elements into Age Friendly programme is a key learning from this initiative. Age Friendly Ireland will continue to situate creative engagement centrally within the approach to developing Age Friendly communities.

Acknowledgements

Age Friendly Ireland would like to acknowledge the Creative Ireland Programme for funding the these initiatives. Credit is also due to all the creative partners, Older People’s Councils, and the many other organisations and individuals who supported the delivery of the initiatives in each region.

Local Age Friendly Programme Managers in each region

The Regional Programme Manager team who co-ordinated and supported the work:

Dublin City Regional Manager	Bruce McDevitt
West Regional Manager	Anne Rizzo
East Regional Manager	Louise Edmonds
North Regional Manager	Mairead Cranley
South East Regional Manager	Alice Corbett
Midlands Regional Manager	Eileen Hughes

Creative Partners

North region	Age & Opportunity (Ciaran McKinney and Fiona Holohan)	
	Artist Marie Brett	
	Arcade (film maker)	
East region	Creative Lives (Damien McGlynn and Lindsey Jackson)	
	Arts co-ordinator Jackie Nowell	
	A large number of local and professional creative groups and individuals delivered workshops at these events	
Midlands region	Music Network (Deirdre Moynihan)	
	Artists	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Alec O’Leary, Co. LaoisAngelina Carberry, Co. LongfordDan Brouder, Co. LongfordCatherine McEvoy, Online ResidencyJacinta McEvoy, Online ResidencyAdele O’Dwyer, Co. OffalyLoreta Mackelaite, Co. OffalyCiaran Wilde, Co. RoscommonGary Baker, Co. RoscommonPhil Robson, Co. RoscommonCatherine McEvoy, Co. WestmeathJacinta McEvoy, Co. Westmeath	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LOETB Learning Hub, Portlaoise, Co. LaoisBallymahon Library, Co. LongfordTullamore Library, Co. OffalyTrinity Arts Centre, Castlerea, Co. RoscommonRoscommon Arts OfficeMullingar Library, Co. WestmeathBallymahon Library Instrument Bank (Music Generation Longford) Ashbourne Library Instrument Bank (Music Generation Meath)
South East region	Arts facilitator Rachel Lartey (Lartey Facilitation)	
	Blessington Men’s Shed	
Dublin City region	Munster Academy of Dance (Carmel McKenna, Jennifer Moran Stritch, Daisy Houghton)	
	Niall Byrnes, Senior Community Worker, Dublin City Council.	
	St. Oliver Plunkett’s Eoghan Ruadh GAA Club, Navan Road, Dublin 7.	
	Dominick Street Recreation Centre, Dominick Street, Dublin 1.	
	Social Sciences ConneXions Research Institute, Technological University of the Shannon.	
	Limerick School of Art & Design, Technological University of the Shannon.	
	Five Lamps Arts Festival	
West region	Music Alive (Barbara MacCarthy)	
	Ger Wolfe musician	

Notes

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Notes

