



Arts Council of Northern

**ART FORM AND SPECIALIST
AREA POLICY 2013-2018**

COMMUNITY ARTS



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Awarding funds from
The National Lottery

www.artscouncil-ni.org

Preamble

The Community Arts Policy has 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 – champion the arts, promote access, build a sustainable sector – are reflected across the set of the Council's Art Form and Specialist Area policies, 2013-18.

Introduction to Community Arts Policy

The Arts Council's definition of Community Arts states:

Community art is the process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression, producing a range of social, cultural and environmental outcomes. 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.

There is a thriving community arts sector in Northern Ireland and its practice is at the cutting edge of community arts development internationally. Providers range from major organisations to small community-based groups working at the grass roots. The range of settings is broad too, including arts centres, community centres, hospitals, prisons, schools, youth centres and public spaces.

Community Arts is inclusive and democratic. It recognises the duality of the artist as enabler and the participant as artist in their own right. Participation in the process can often ignite a life-long engagement in the arts.

Community Arts transforms both individuals and communities. Recognising this, the Arts Council has invested significantly in the sector and between 2007 and 2012 the Arts Council distributed £15 million to Community Arts organisations through both Exchequer and Lottery funding. This ensured the stability of many strategically-important organisations and the development of major programmes right across Northern Ireland.

At a regional level the Arts Council supports a number of initiatives, including Community Arts Partnership the principal network organisation for the promotion, development and delivery of community arts practice across Northern Ireland.

The Arts Council has developed a range of programmes and research initiatives geared to promoting access to and participation in the arts, each of which reflect strong Community Arts values. These include, Building Peace through the Arts – Re-Imaging Communities Programme, The Intercultural Arts Programme, Arts and Older People and Young People and Wellbeing Programme. In addition to these larger programmes we will continue to support local initiatives through our Small Grants Programme, Start UP awards and Project Funding.

The Council is committed to sustaining current excellence, while encouraging new growth and helping it to develop. Additionally, it will support the continuing evaluation of community arts work. The effectiveness of such work as a tool for social cohesion and collective and individual development must be demonstrated to promote the benefits and power of community arts to policy and decision makers.

Funding Objectives

- Support and develop the community arts sector through partnerships with the, Community Arts Partnership, Statutory, Voluntary and Community organisations;
- stabilise key community arts organisations through funding schemes;
- support reconciliation within and between communities, promote intercultural dialogue and good relations, and promote community and individual well-being;
- support innovative projects which promote high quality outputs as well as high quality processes;
- provide more opportunities and training for new and emerging community artists;

- encourage applications from organisations outside Belfast or Derry and particularly in rural areas and those communities identified as being in need of regeneration;
- support community arts organisations to develop effective business plans and strategies for sustainability;
- encourage projects which demonstrate a sharing of resources and which promote best value practices within the sector.

Additional Information

'Ambitions for the Arts' Five Year Arts Strategy, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy

Art Form and Specialist Area Policies, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts

Acquisitions	Drama
Arts & Disability	Film & TV
Arts & Health	Intercultural Arts
Arts & Older People	International
Architecture	Language Arts
Building Peace through the Arts	Literature
Carnival Arts	Music & Opera
Circus Arts	Public Art
Commissioning	Traditional Arts
Community Arts	Visual Arts
Crafts & Applied Arts	Voluntary Arts
Dance	Youth Arts



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