



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



Creativity in Older Age 2022

Background

Creativity is a set of innate abilities and learned skills, the capacity of individuals and organisations to transcend accepted ideas and norms and, by drawing on imagination, to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity. Through performing or visual arts, culture, and heritage-based activities, creativity has been demonstrated to play an important role in promoting positive health and wellbeing because it creates a space for social connection, enhancing self-esteem and resilience. It helps people to de-stress and relax, and supports people to manage their health and wellbeing and enable recovery.

Two recently published research reports, one by The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) at Trinity College Dublin, which was commissioned by the Creative Ireland Programme¹, and another by the Institute of Public Health (IPH), examined the implications for health and wellbeing of arts and creativity in later life. Both reports found a positive association between creative engagement and health and wellbeing. The TILDA report found that older adults who participate in creative activities enjoyed a higher quality of life and were less likely to be lonely, depressed and stressed than their contemporaries who did not, while the IPH report found that participation in group arts and creativity interventions helps to support the physical, mental, and social aspects of ageing. It was notable that those with lower levels of education and income were least likely to participate.

As Ireland continues to move through the COVID pandemic, it is important to recognise that significant wellbeing issues may present as a result of social distancing and the longer term effects of cocooning, particularly amongst older members of our communities including residents of healthcare facilities such as nursing homes. The benefits to wellbeing of creative engagement initiatives is well-established; however, normal community engagement in creative and cultural activities has been fundamentally disrupted.

¹ https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/app/uploads/2021/11/2021_ResearchBrief_CreativeActivity-1.pdf

In 2020 and 2021, the Creative Ireland Programme developed and implemented the *Creativity in Older Age* scheme to support specific creative initiatives to support positive ageing and wellbeing programmes for older people, taking account of public health guidance in the community and for healthcare facilities.

Creativity in Older Age Scheme 2022

The Creative Ireland Programme is again inviting applications from local authorities for the *Creativity in Older Age 2022* challenge fund. Proposals for new and continuing creative initiatives in the community and/or residential healthcare facilities should seek to

- support positive ageing, and/or
- mitigate the negative impact of social isolation and social distancing, and/or
- develop and establish new forms of creative engagement for older people that accommodate prevailing public health guidance in the community and for residential healthcare facilities.

Local authority Culture and Creativity Teams in all 31 local authorities are invited to submit a proposal for initiatives jointly with their local authority colleagues working to support the Age Friendly and Healthy Ireland Programmes.

1. This challenge fund will support the delivery of a programme of creative engagement to older members living in our communities and/or long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. Given the evidence in the recent TILDA research that discrepancies in levels of participation were visible among those in lowest educational and income groups; projects that clearly target this cohort are particularly welcome.
2. The programme must demonstrate creative quality, with significant and sustained reach amongst the older community. The fund is not designed for the support of once off events. It is important that programmes are fully reported upon and contain provision for final reporting to include an evaluation.
3. Proposals involving engagement with those living in long-term healthcare facilities should demonstrate they have secured full support of the relevant facility operators/managers.
4. The programme of activities must be delivered in full compliance with the relevant prevailing public health advice. Programme proposals must therefore be sustainable in light of the evolving nature of such public health advice and the vulnerability of members of our older community.
5. The Creative Ireland Programme recognises that there is demographic variance (differences in population size, age, urban/rural, socio-economic profile etc.) between local authority areas and that, therefore, the scale of project required in order to have an impact will differ between authorities. It is anticipated that

funding of varying amounts will be awarded of between €25,000 and €50,000 for individual projects, with the maximum available only where there is evidence that the scale is appropriate.

6. The programme of engagement must be completed no later than November 2022.

The closing date for receipt of initial proposals is **January 25th 2022** (close of business). A proposal describing

- (i) the creative programme of engagement, delivery schedule and expected outcomes,
- (ii) how the objectives of the *Creativity in Older Age Scheme* will be met,
- (iii) experience and expertise of programme partners and management, and
- (iv) costs, including costs funded elsewhere, and amount of funding requested from the *Creativity in Older Age Scheme*

should be forwarded for consideration to the Creative Ireland Programme.

Application and Evaluation Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Creative Ireland Programme as follows:

Criterion	Marks Available
Quality of the proposal in terms of meeting programme objectives	35
Experience and expertise of the team	35
Anticipated value for money	30
Total	100

Proposals in pdf format should be emailed to creativeireland@tcagsm.gov.ie by close of business on Tuesday January 25th 2022 with '*Creativity in Older Age Scheme 2022*' as the subject line.

Appendix

Range of project types supported in 2021

What types of projects were successful in 2021?

A range of different types of projects were successfully funded in 2021, from projects rooted in specific local tradition, to others at national scale; supporting a wide spectrum of creative engagement. An illustrative selection of the projects supported in 2021 is detailed below.

Dance

Doorstep Dances – Carlow

Doorstep Dances was a six-week dance and movement programme where participants engaged in a series of 1-2-1 'in person' workshops led by a local dance artist. Each week the Doorstep Dances team visited the participants' homes to dance, chat and even have a cup of tea. Each dance session was designed and tailored to meet each participant's needs, abilities and music choices.

Creative landscaping

Enniscorthy Activity Garden

The Enniscorthy Activity Garden is the name of the resourced outdoor physical activity green space for the Wexford Mental Health Services on the grounds of St. John's Hospital, Enniscorthy. The garden is mainly used by older adults. A lead designer is facilitating a co-design process with staff, service users and the community, re-imagining this green space into an engaging space for all. This creative process is allowing older people input into how they would like to use a green space for fun, creativity and general well-being.

Visual Arts/Crafts

Borris Lace by Post

Borris Lace was introduced to South County Carlow 174 years ago as a way for local people to make an income during famine times. The '*Borris Lace by Post*' project mirrored the concept of supporting local communities through troubled times by addressing positive mental health and physical dexterity, and by promoting an indigenous craft and all the history, links and stories that go with it. Anyone over 65 years old and living in Carlow was welcome to participate.

Two local artists were engaged to design a six-month project whereby participants received a monthly pack by post to learn the creative processes involved in making lace, sewing techniques and more. The needs of the participants in terms of

eyesight/dexterity were taken into account when designing the packs. Participants were invited to send back their creations, stories of their own family's lace, and reminiscences in stamped addressed envelopes provided by the project.

To mark the culmination of the project, a celebratory exhibition and light projection will take place in Borris village on 13th and 14th December 2021. The exhibition of lace, craft packs and the light projection will take place at Borris House, where Borris lace originated.

Music

COVID Care Concerts

COVID Care Concerts is an initiative delivered by the Mobile Music Machine in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The series involves some of Ireland's finest musicians and singers presenting live, outdoor, socially-distanced concerts in the gardens and grounds of residential care homes and hospital settings across Ireland. *COVID Care Concerts* provide emotional and psychological respite to residents, patients and staff in some of the most vulnerable communities across Ireland that have been deeply impacted by COVID-19.

Residents are asked to choose their favourite works from a playlist in advance, from all genres of music, from classical to opera, film and popular songs, and traditional music. Staff are encouraged to support the residents to unlock memories around these pieces, by writing down or recording a little oral history that they associate with their chosen piece. This type of creative involvement helps unlock memories in those who are dealing with dementia. It also allows participants to express locked up emotions in a group setting when listening to the music. The residents and service users are also invited to use other forms of creative expression, such as painting or drawing, to express the deep emotional connections they have to this music.

First piloted in 2020, the project successfully scaled up to national level and has delivered over 760 concerts all over Ireland during 2020/2022.

Video footage of some Creative Ireland supported projects in this area are here:

<https://youtu.be/exANa1sdVrs> Round up of *Creativity in Older Age* projects

<https://youtu.be/16KnaScI41c> Modern Day Mummers in Leitrim

https://youtu.be/C_jzU-TJ5Ng Kildare Notebook project

https://youtu.be/QjLYGIU6C_c COVID Care Concerts