
PEOPLE, PLACES AND SPACES

CREATIVITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

**OUR
CREATIVE
VOICE**

65% say their local area would lose something of value if the area lost its arts and cultural activities

Scottish Opinion Survey 56 Degree
Insight, December 2020

Art and creativity improve our communities, support regeneration, provide vital hubs and bring people together. Shared creative spaces can facilitate greater social inclusion while cultural events can foster pride in the places we live. Art and creativity have a transformative and empowering effect. They boost confidence and support people to participate in their wider communities, to take a role in decision-making and to change the society they live in.

Art can help promote and foster citizenship, encouraging people to participate in their communities and have the confidence to take the lead and effect change. This is particularly important for those who feel disenfranchised: access to art and creativity can encourage agency which can, in turn, lead to action. The arts, therefore, play a pivotal role in championing people to participate in and change the world they live in.

In addition, arts organisations and institutions themselves can play a civic role, providing places for people to come together and spaces to make their voice heard. Organisations which promote co-creation are particularly significant: by reflecting, responding to, and creating with the communities of which they are part, they can better meet the specific needs of local groups and provide a platform for issues and people who might otherwise be underrepresented or unheard.

As well as playing a vital role in developing, sustaining and inspiring arts and creativity, communities are intrinsic to protecting and promoting our cultural heritage. Our oral traditions, festive events, social practices and skills in traditional crafts are infused with invaluable knowledge and skills that are passed on from one generation to the next. We also create our own contemporary practices and cultures which hold deep meaning, provide connection to others and contribute to our sense of self. When creativity and community combine, we can express ourselves – as individuals, as groups and as a wider society.

The character of a place can be shaped by arts and creativity, defining the identity of a village, town or city, and encourage residents to celebrate the places and spaces they share. Access to creative activity and events can also support inclusion, leading to an increased sense of belonging and tackling isolation. In addition, a place with a strong cultural offer makes it more desirable to people and businesses as a place to live and work, helping to sustain local economies.

People who attend or participate in the arts are more likely to volunteer and give to charity.

Changing the World through Arts and Kindness (People United)

Cultural events have the potential to offer opportunities for everyone to participate, regardless of their background, and help to break down barriers between opposing perspectives. Art can bring different groups of people together in a shared setting, for example primary school children participating in a creative project with residents of a care home. Encouraging close collaborations such as these builds connections, which can promote understanding between groups, reduce prejudice and increase cooperation, not just during the activity itself but across the wider community.

Engagement with art and creativity can help people understand one another, creating stronger social relationships, community cohesion and make communities feel safer. Research demonstrates that cultural participation can contribute to improved engagement with the wider community and even play a role in tackling crime.

There are clear and significant impacts of art and creativity to communities: contributing to stronger social ties, creating pride in the places we live, supporting a sense of citizenship and breaking down barriers. These benefits also highlight the importance of closing the gap in cultural participation between the most and least deprived areas of the country, of increasing access and engagement in the arts especially amongst economically disadvantaged communities and challenging the barriers that prevent participation.

Everyone is entitled to creativity, regardless of who they are and where they live; we should all have the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the cultural life of our communities.

Children who engage with the arts are more likely to vote.

ImagineNation report

Find out more:

Changing the World through Arts and Kindness (Evidence from People United 2007-2017)
Explore how the arts can inspire kindness, community and social change.

Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of community singing on mental health-related quality of life of older people
(Simon Coulton, Stephen Clift, Ann Skingley and John Rodriguez, 2018)
Research on the impact community singing on mental health-related quality of life of older people.

ImagineNation: The Value of Cultural Learning (Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA), 2017)
Read about the value of cultural learning and its impact on a range of areas including voting, volunteering and reduction of re-offending.

Understanding Everyday Participation: Articulating Cultural Values
Further information on a five-year research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, part of their **Connected Communities: Cultures and Creative Economies** programme.

Understanding the value of arts and culture (The AHRC Cultural Value Project, 2016)
Take a look at this research from a three-year project which focused on why arts and culture matter, and understanding the difference they make to individuals to society.