



THE SURF AWARDS: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

An outcomes report from a series of SURF workshops in 2018

SURF and the Scottish Government deliver the annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration to identify and share examples of high impact in addressing social and economic problems in Scottish places.

In May of 2018, SURF arranged a series of shared learning workshop events with representatives of the [five category winning and shortlisted SURF Award initiatives](#) from the 2017 process. The goal of these events was to explore, in some depth, what transferable lessons these projects can offer to regeneration practitioners working in other sectors and geographies.

This report presents a summary of the main outcomes from the three SURF Awards workshop events, and their respective themes:

- New approaches to tackling barriers to employability;
- The role of creative arts in regeneration and;
- Successful approaches to regenerating Scotland's places.

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CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Transferable Lessons: New Approaches to Tackling Barriers to Employability	3
Transferable Lessons: The Role of Creative Arts in Regeneration	10
Transferable Lessons: Successful Approaches to Regenerating Scotland's Places	17

Introduction

The annual SURF Awards for Best Practice in Community Regeneration process is widely recognised as being the most prestigious awards in the broad regeneration scene in Scotland.

The purpose of the SURF Awards process is:

- To recognise and reward best practice;
- To promote and disseminate best practice across Scotland as means of sharing knowledge and experience and enhancing policy and practice;
- To highlight the role that regeneration projects and initiatives have in improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

2017 was the 19th year of the SURF Awards, and the 14th that it has been delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government.

Nominations to the 2017 SURF Awards were assessed by an independent panel of 20 expert judges drawn from national regeneration-related organisations and community groups in Scotland. Working in teams, the judging panel members agreed category shortlists, made site visits to these shortlisted projects, and collaboratively selected winning projects.

The four category winning projects for the 2017 SURF Awards were:

- **Creative Regeneration:** [The Broomhill Project](#)
- **Youth Employability:** [LinkLiving](#)
- **Community Led Regeneration:** [Dundee International Women's Centre](#)
- **Scotland's Most Improved Place:** [Irvine](#)
- **Housing:** [Ulva Ferry Housing Project](#)

These winning projects were announced at a SURF Awards Presentation Dinner event in Glasgow in December 2017. The following year, SURF invited colleagues in all five winning projects to

participate in a series of SURF Awards shared learning workshop events with regeneration practitioners from the SURF network.

The events were designed to explore and highlight the main factors that led to the success of the 2017 SURF Award winning initiatives that could potentially help initiatives in other contexts and places.

The following sections of this report highlight the main areas of discussion and outcomes from the following three themed events in the series:

- **New approaches to tackling barriers to employability** with LinkLiving, DRC Youth Project, Creative Pathways, Dundee International Women’s Centre and Skills Development Scotland. Held in the Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh, on 3rd May 2018;
- **The role of creative arts in regeneration** with The Broomhill Project, Cateran’s Common Wealth, Alchemy Film and Arts, Creative Scotland and the Cultural Enterprise Office. Held in BAaD, Glasgow, on 17 May 2018;
- **Successful approaches to regenerating Scotland’s places** with North Ayrshire Council on behalf of Irvine, Ulva Ferry Housing Project, Scottish Government, Scotland’s Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Held in The Townhouse, Irvine, on 31st May 2018.

SURF is grateful to the Scottish Government for supporting the SURF Awards process, including these workshop events. The 2017 SURF Awards process also benefited from the support of the following additional partners in the delivery of thematic categories: [Architecture & Design Scotland](#), [Creative Scotland](#), [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), [Scotland’s Towns Partnership](#), and [Skills Development Scotland](#).

Transferable Lessons

1) New Approaches to Tackling Challenges in Youth Employability

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning and shortlisted projects:

LinkLiving, DRC Youth Project, Creative Pathways and the Dundee International Women’s Centre.

An additional presentation was provided by SURF Award Partner Skills Development Scotland.

About the event

The first workshop in the series highlighted the 2017 SURF Award winning projects in the ‘Youth Employability: Overcoming Barriers’ category and the winner of the ‘Community Led Regeneration’ category.

All of the initiatives are working with people who have additional barriers to entering the employability pipeline.

The half-day workshop took place on the 3rd May 2018 in The Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, and featured presentations from project managers and an input from SURF Awards partner Skills Development Scotland. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 45 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [LinkLiving](#)

LinkLiving, through the Step On and Step Up programmes, work with young people in the local authority regions of Edinburgh, Falkirk and Fife. It aims to support young people in seeking employment, education and training by helping identify goals and removing barriers to progress.

LinkLiving is a social enterprise and part of 8 companies that make up the Link Group. The Step On and Step Up programmes are part of a wider approach by the Link Group to combat inequality. The Link Academy in Falkirk opened in 2017 and provides a dedicated building from which end to end employability programmes are delivered. The main focus is on getting those furthest from the job market into work, training or further education. The Scottish Government employability pipeline provides a structured approach that allows those who get 'lost' to be brought back into the system at right stage.



Step On is the first stage of the LinkLiving programme. It adopts an early engagement approach, working with young people who have additional barriers that prevent them from even engaging with the first stage of the employability pipeline. The second stage of the programme is Step Up which provides a more structured system with coursework and work placements, with a view to getting people into further destinations within the labour market.

LinkLiving have acknowledged that there are real barriers to progressing young people through the employability pipeline. People were getting stuck at certain stages and not moving on. They realised that they would need to take a step back and address the underlying issues that were causing the jam. These include personal barriers such as lack of self-confidence, bullying and mental health issues around self-harm. LinkLiving realised that traditional approaches were no longer working for these young people and that they would need to provide support pre-pipeline to help combat these issues, recognising that one size does not fit all and that tailored approaches that meet the relevant needs of young people were needed.

It was identified that some participants needed additional tools to help them overcome barriers. These included support with wellbeing techniques, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, mindfulness, peer support and education.

Steps to Resilience, a pre-stage support programme, was implemented to provide additional support to individuals and help them to find solutions for themselves. The project highlights the importance of non-vocational wider life skills that are beneficial to all.

LinkLiving made the decision to do something different and to think outside the box. However, this led to a change in funder as they required a more flexible approach. Working as part of a supportive larger organisation, Link Group, allowed them the freedom to try a new approach.

Presenters:

- *Grant Alexander, Employability Development Officer, Link Group*
- *Nicky Paton, Employability Development Manager, LinkLiving Ltd*

Second Presentation Summary: Dundee International Women's Centre

Dundee International Women's Centre's (DIWC) vision is to provide a space where women and girls from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities achieve their personal goals, reach their full potential, and prosper in their community. They are not strictly an employability programme but they provide a wide range of support to participants to help them get into employment or further education.



Founded in 1969, as part of the Urban Aid programme, the centre originally provided support to immigrants to help integrate them into the community, essentially by teaching English to help break down language barriers. Their work expanded in 2007 and they now offer a variety of support services, such as health and wellbeing, informal and formal learning, training and qualifications, employability, parenting and social events, to participants from over 81 countries. The centre engages with women deemed to be the most socially isolated. They have found that a general increase in confidence makes participants more likely to engage with other services.

As well as those with low educational attainment, the centre welcomes a lot of highly qualified women who find themselves in limbo as their qualifications do not match those recognised by the UK labour market.

The DIWC provides support to overcome barriers to employment, such as interview preparation, support with filling in forms, help to overcome language barriers, advice on meeting employer's expectations and confidence building. They have found that a lot of women were not comfortable or used to praising themselves and analysing their own personal skills and weaknesses.

The centre offers a Science Programme, which is run in partnership with the James Hutton Institute, for women who have existing science degrees. Participants are able to take part in practical work experience placements with the James Hutton Institute. The work placements help to build wider skills such as working with others and supports their use of the English language.

In 2017/18, 38 candidates gained further qualifications, with 16 going on to employment. Getting into employment helps contribute towards the women's wider independence and has a positive ripple effect on family life.

Childcare is one of the main barriers to accessing services for many women. Rise and Shine is a social enterprise operated by DIWC which provides free provision of childcare, allowing women to attend classes and engage with the employability programmes. This service employs 12 practitioners and 9 crèche staff within the centre and in the mobile crèche units. The majority of the trained employees have been educated within the DIWC.

Presenters:

- *Fatima Ramzan, Project Worker, DIWC*
- *Vaqar Salimi, Community Worker, DIWC*

Third Presentation Summary: Creative Pathways Barrhead

Creative Pathways Barrhead is an employability programme delivered by Impact Arts in partnership with Barrhead Housing Association. It uses the power of arts and creativity to inspire and motivate young people, aged 16-24, who are not in employment, education or training. Creative Pathways is largely funded through the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund, Big Lottery Our Bright Future Fund and Barrhead Housing Association.

Barrhead HA provide Impact Arts with access to land and under used green spaces. The young people then lead on commissions; carry out community consultation, co design and learn practical and transferrable skills. There is a strong link with the community centre and the young people involved in the programme delivered a mural project following consultation with the centre users.

The programme feeds into stages 2-3 of the Scottish Government employability pipeline structure. One of the main challenges is around the stark contrast between various groups in terms of lifestyle choices. Impact Arts link with other agencies to bring in quality speakers to act as role models and to enhance the aspirations of the young people involved, helping them to make better lifestyle choices. The community consultations and positive outcomes from the programme have had a positive impact on wider community perceptions of the local young people.

As part of their Enterprise Skills Development Training the young people took over a shop unit within Buchanan Galleries in Glasgow City Centre for one week. As well as running the retail unit they also manufactured and produced the products that were on sale.



Another challenge within Barrhead is that young people do not want to leave Barrhead. The programme organises excursions trips to Edinburgh and Glasgow to get them out of their familiar environment and to help widen their horizons, by extending their existing networks and taking the participants out of their comfort zone.

The Crafting a Future programme helps to develop and build participants 'soft skills', such as team working, deadlines etc. A dedicated Opportunities Coordinator offers 40 hours training, access to qualifications and one to one support to help build skills and prepare people for future employment, this includes support to prepare CVs and interview techniques. Impact Arts work in partnership with other employability providers, such as Rathbone, and employers to enhance the progression of the participants. 86% of participants went on to positive destinations.

Barrhead HA view the partnership with Impact Arts as beneficial to the wider community. Buy in from the young people in the local area is essential for the success of the Housing Association projects. Allowing the young people to lead on the consultation and delivery of the projects gives them a sense of ownership and reduces negative outcomes, such as vandalism. Barrhead HA have linked in with the young people enrolled on the Creative Pathways programme to deliver a number of successful projects. Once such project was an intergenerational photography exhibition looking at 'Then and Now'. This project helped foster relationships between the different generations within the community and also enhanced the young people's digital skills.

Impact Arts believe the success of the programme is due to its flexible nature and being tailored to meet the interests of the young people involved.

Presenters:

- *Fiona Doring, Director, Impact Arts*
- *Bryan Dando, Community Regeneration Officer, Barrhead Housing Association*

Fourth Presentation Summary: DRC Youth Project

The DRC Youth Project is a proactive person-centred youth service which offers meaningful long term support to socially excluded young people (aged 8-24) who dwell along the Dumbarton Road corridor. They are based in Yoker/ Scotstoun, and also run sessions in Whiteinch, delivering an open and inclusive three stage youth work and employability system which deals with almost 300 young people on an annual basis. The majority of young people DRC engage with are considered the 'hardest to reach'. Young people who are often most affected by prevalent social and economic issues within the communities they work with. They are focussed on tackling these issues and aim to provide young people with a constructive alternative so they can become empowered to make positive changes in their lives.

DRC sensed a need for proper employability services in the area and felt that youth services and employability services complement each other and should go hand in hand. They offer an employability Drop In Service every day from 10am until 5pm, then the youth centre runs in the evening.



They established a Priority Case File with funding from Glasgow City Council's IGF fund. This is targeted at the hardest to reach young people; those furthest removed, such as those with anti-social behaviour issues, early school leavers etc. They have incorporated health and fitness into the programme, offering elements such as football coaching tied into the employability support and training. They hold these football sessions in the neighbouring affluent area. This helps to

break down barriers and integrate the young people into the wider community.

DRC have set up Pathfinder Programme with employability support agency WorkingRite. This has been expanded to 500 young people across North Glasgow who have never had access to employment. Emphasis is placed on securing solid jobs and qualifications which are recognised by employers. This is important when trying to connect with young people, that you are offering them something worthwhile. Flexibility is key to the success of the programme, being able to offer non-classroom environments for those who do not fit into the classroom based learning approach.

There are a numbers of barriers which prevent young people from engaging with the employability programmes. The first being distance and territorial issues. Young men from the area have existing issues with gang and territorial allegiances. This can make it difficult when taking them into new areas. Existing associations have to be broken down to encourage people to move out of their comfort zone. It is initially useful to meet with them in their own area if they are not willing to travel. The cost of travel can also be an issue. There are travel funds available to try and overcome financial barriers.

For certain young people the school environment has not worked out and they are put off by classrooms and group work. It is essential to create a welcoming environment, making young people feel at home with plenty of breaks and short sessions. Helping them to integrate into a group environment and linking them with people they know. Literacy can be an issue with some of the

participants. Additional support is provided with scribes available, extra time to go through tests and techniques to help with understanding.

DRC have found that some of the young people need routine. Free gym passes are offered as an incentive. They have noticed positive changes in harmful behaviours and they have eradicated gang fighting amongst 16+, as young people are recognising that there are jobs and opportunities available to them. They also offer an Aftercare Service for those who don't succeed in getting the job first time. Encouraging them to continue engaging with the service and staying on a positive path.

DRC have found that there are 11 key factors to making the project work. These include;

1. A proper engagement strategy – this includes carrying out street work and talking to other organisations about what they are delivering.
2. Linking with local businesses – do they employ young people? Build up your own portfolio of local opportunities as well as linking in with employability support agencies, such as WorkingRite.
3. Offer a wide selection of accreditation in different fields such as construction etc. Young people recognise these and they want to achieve qualifications without sitting in a classroom.
4. Being Flexible – this includes being open to go to where the young person is at a time that suits them.
5. Being selective with your partners – surround yourself with partners that are easy to work with/make decisions. You don't have to work with everyone, work with relevant partners that are a good fit.
6. Always listen to the young people and take into account their opinions.
7. Provide proper after care – most will not be successful straight away, it is not possible.
8. Feed people back into the system – don't be afraid to do this. Keep them on a positive path.
9. Be patient
10. Never give up on young people.
11. Be surrounded by a good staff team who care about the project.

Presenters:

- *Arthur McNeaney, Project Coordinator, DRC Youth Project*
- *Gerard Espie, Youth Engagement Worker, DRC Youth Project*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Skills Development Scotland](#)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) are the national skills agency for Scotland and employ around 1400 people. The Scottish Government dictate the direction of travel for what support SDS can provide, which does not leave them with much flexibility in what they can deliver.

They engage with people in schools and school leavers, businesses and the economy. Their main role is to get the right people into the right jobs. Part of their role involves speaking with employers to ascertain skills gaps. This feeds into Sectoral Skills Plans which are then overlapped with Regional Plans to forecast what will happen within sectors. This information can then be fed to Employability Advisors.

SDS have recognised that the employment market is changing and young people are entering a world where it is essential to keep updating skills. Young people will need to build resilience to handling job change, regardless of where they sit on the skills pipeline, as long term careers are no longer guaranteed.

Having recognised that not everyone wants face-to-face employment services and that most would prefer an online resource, SDS have developed Myworldofwork.co.uk. The service is accessible to all and offers different options to meet the needs of the user. The site also offers a lot of useful tools for projects and staff to use for training purposes. As well as this SDS offer a number of support services, some are targeted at specific groups and others are more widely accessible. One such service is the Veteran's Service which is targeted at those who have left the forces and need additional support to find alternative employment.

The Modern Apprenticeship Scheme is a flagship programme and now offers a Foundation Apprenticeship programme which starts in school. It offers an alternative route to University. SDS recognise that there is still a stigma attached to MAs and that they are seen, by some, as a lesser route. This is something that needs to change. SDS are now accepting MAs to work within their organisation and feel that they have brought life into the organisation and offer new skills, such as social media knowledge. They are also now offering year long internships, which provide real-life work experience opportunities.

There are still barriers towards getting more women involved in STEM and engaging harder to reach and disadvantaged groups in the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. This is something that SDS need to prioritise with a more holistic view.

Presenter:

- *Michelle Gibson, Partnerships Manager, Skills Development Scotland*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

- One delegate spoke about the importance of flexibility and developing different ways of working. Best practice is coming from the frontline and the Third Sector; there is not the same level of flexibility from funders, or being built into the National Strategy.
- A culture of short-term funding was also highlighted. There is a need for longer term three year funding streams to provide security, allow for more flexibility in approaches and the development of innovative methods. Flexibility must be built into funding terms to allow projects to adapt to meet the needs of participants.
- In response it was noted that a new Scottish Employability Service is due to be launched. However, there is still uncertainty around what this service will entail, which makes it difficult to forward plan.
- It was noted that SDS only get yearlong funding from the Scottish Government, which limits what funding they can offer.
- A delegate argued that we need to push funding and decision making down to the local level, to those who receive it, and rebel against centralisation.
- The Scottish Government's current Review of Local Governance was highlighted to delegates as a method of feeding into government and the possibilities this offers of new connections between local and national level.
- We need to recognise what is happening in schools where there is a difference in approach. Teachers feel more empowered to talk about employability.
- This is, however, not the same situation in special need schools, where there is a need for additional practical support. Employability support for special need schools is inhibited by

limits to funding. Therefore, it fails to meet the needs and expectations of the children, and they are missing out on opportunities that are more readily available in mainstream schools. Inconsistency in funding leads to a breakdown in trust and lowering of aspirations.

- It was felt that there is disconnect between the National Strategy and financial pressures.
- Government can only improve if they listen to the best practice examples coming from the grassroots level. How do you feed that up to government? They consult the same people rather than listen to new approaches, which results in the same old ideas and nothing changes.
- Stage 1 and 2 of the employability pipeline are the areas that need further support. Resilience support needs to be factored in. This is where people are falling through the cracks. Registered youth unemployment figures are falling, but it is not factoring in those who are disengaged, this effects funding.
- There is a need for longer engagement periods to build trust and relationships. We need to stop seeing jobs as the only positive outcome.
- There should be more support for businesses to engage with young people. Support to assist businesses in making placements etc. work.
- Acknowledgement that role models start in the home. There are not a lot of opportunities to re-train parents/carers who have low attainment/skills. There is a need to up-skill the older generation. Apprenticeships have a cut off age of 24. We need to address those who are out with the 16-24 age bracket.
- Unofficially DRC is working with 26+ as other opportunities have faded away. Some people take longer to turn their lives around.
- There is also a notable gap in services available to those over 50.

2) The Role of Creative Arts in Regeneration

With introductory presentations from all three SURF Award projects shortlisted in the Creative Regeneration category:

The Broomhill Project, Cateran's Common Wealth and Alchemy Film and Arts

About the event

The second workshop in the series highlighted the 2017 SURF Award Winner and Highly Commended projects in the Creative Regeneration category.

The projects featured at the workshop varied between urban and rural settings, but are all using creative approaches to engage local communities to achieve positive regeneration outcomes.

The half-day workshop took place on the 17th May 2018 in BAaD in Glasgow. The event featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF partners, namely Creative Scotland and the Cultural Enterprise Office. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 68 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [The Broomhill Project](#)

The Broomhill Project is delivered by RIG Arts, a socially engaged arts charity based in Greenock. The Broomhill Project began with initial funds promised over a three year period from River Clyde Homes (RCH) and a one off sponsorship from British Gas via RCH. These funds allowed RIG Arts to initiate an arts pilot to engage Broomhill residents in the regeneration of the area, providing them with a mouthpiece in the process whilst building community spirit and casting a positive light on the area.

The Broomhill Project is an ambitious publicly engaged arts project, connecting local residents and artists in collaborations to create physical artworks, events and performances. Its main focus is using creativity and innovation to work with underprivileged people in the community, assisting them in developing their ability and impetus to affect change. RIG Arts used the initial commitment from River Clyde Homes to act as seed funding in order to secure further funding for projects developed with the community to add to the area's regeneration. To date, they have secured a further £296,880 towards creative endeavours in Broomhill including murals, community gardens, artist residencies, films, community workshops, events, heritage projects and climate challenge workshops.



The work in Broomhill was heavily informed by a visit to Fatima Mansions in Dublin to see the work of an arts project there. It is important that work emerges from the 'cultural archaeology of the place,' acknowledging the fact that working class places and people have cultural value. Broomhill has a rich history. If you don't get people involved and build community spirit you don't get the passion back into the place. It is important to create a local identity and sense of place, show people what it could be.

The dedicated Art Flat has been key to the success of the project. It is based in the heart of the community and is a fully accessible neutral space where people can meet and take part in creative activity.

RIG thought it was important to bring high calibre artists into the area to help develop professional artworks with the community. The artists engaged with the community in a collaborative approach, it was not an artist led sculpture. The main focus was on changing the perception of the area and making it a place that people would want to live. They focussed on building the people not just the fabric of the area.

You have to get out into the street and fully engage with the community, 'Festivalize what you are doing.' A variety of different events have been held, including an event focussed around an important local building being demolished. The community was brought together to share memories, they used film and visual arts and the building was mic'd up to create its own music.

A key method of engaging with the community was working with children and young people, which offers an in to the adults. Producing high quality work was essential, art does not need to be 'dumbed down' to appeal and involve people. Keep a cultural archive and document your work for learning purposes.

Presenter:

- *Karen Orr, Project Manager, RIG Arts*

Second Presentation Summary: [Cateran's Common Wealth](#)

Cateran's Common Wealth is a multi-event programme, started in 2012, which is aimed at sustaining the 'common wealth' of the communities on the Cateran Trail in Perthshire.



Common Wealth means the common wellbeing of the place, and this multifaceted concept is reflected in the work of the project. The marketisation of society in the West has led to people losing track of their common wealth. It is about the things that belong to all of us, such as areas of natural heritage, myths and stories, history, contemporary arts scene, traditional arts and a strong sense of community. These are all good foundations to build on.

The project cost £250k to develop the trail programme and deliver three activities. It was funded through a wide range of sources, including Creative Scotland and LEADER. Three quarters of the funding applications submitted by the project were rejected and the bureaucracy and restrictions of funding applications caused delays and almost scuppered the project completely. A great deal of tenacity and sacrifice has been required from the project staff. The team held 50 coffee mornings each year, which generated an income of £30k-£40k to be distributed for community activities.

The three main projects delivered were;

- **A Story Box** – A converted phonebox which shares 160 stories, poems and songs via recordings.
- **Common Ground** – This element of the project includes digital resources and textile works. A digital trail made up of aerial photos was developed and artist Deirdre Nelson worked with local groups, including schools and care homes, to produce textiles.
- **Story of the Trail in 100 objects** - Old and new objects by local artists and makers, which connected to the local community and that were inspired by the surroundings, were used to form a museum exhibition. A leaflet detailing the display was also created. The exhibition has been viewed by 2600 of the 15,000 local residents.

Future plans to continue the legacy of the project include the development of the Catearan Eco-Museum, which would be focussed on the wealth of place and delivering a holistic view.

The project believes that the success lies in ensuring high production values, which is appreciated by the community. They also firmly believe in keeping things local, using local artists and suppliers where possible.

Catearan has faced a number of challenges. They took a non-institutional approach and worked through other organisations. This can lead to challenges and complexities on delivering to timescale etc. They found that a city bias existed, where cities are seen to be better. Funders etc. have a better knowledge of cities and this can sometimes go against more rural projects.

‘Sweat equity’ is something that became very apparent as they progressed with the project. There is a large amount of unpaid work for artists and freelancers that goes unrecognised. A new way of demonstrating impact and recognising the additional unpaid time put in by staff and volunteers needs to be developed.

Presenter:

- *Claire Cooper, Freelance Artist, Catearan’s Common Wealth*

Third Presentation Summary: [Alchemy Film and Arts](#)

Alchemy Film and Arts is a high quality experimental film festival held in Hawick, in the Scottish Borders. Feeling frustrated that the only place that you could see quality artist made films was in the bigger cities the Alchemy Film Festival was born. Based on the spirit of invention, the festival sets out to challenge the existing narrative of Hawick and to challenge the urban centrism of cultural production. Filmmaking was seen to be stuck in cities, so Alchemy asked the question 'why can't we have this in a rural centre?' Particularly in a town that is facing challenges and decline.

Alchemy wanted to challenge the community, give them something they may not have considered, and to create something that challenged their existing views about art and filmmaking. Taking outward looking internationalism and rooting it back in the local.

Despite initial reluctance from the community to engage, the project has been highly successful at bedding into the community. The first festival saw low attendance figures and they received around 50 entries from filmmakers. The festival now boasts over 1000 film entries and much higher audience numbers.



A key success has been linking local and international. Students from the Borders went to Venice as invigilators for the Biennale, commissioning and showing films from borders artists. They focus on high quality work alongside work in community, demonstrating a clear link between high quality and local work.

Alchemy developed a high street space for year round exhibitions. This has been very important for community engagement, the shopfront location draws people in, and has helped to reinvent a vacant high street. They are challenging the idea that art is not for them.

The offer of a Community Filmmaking Training Programme has increased the appetite within the community to learn how to create their own films. They have linked in with Screen Machine to work on creating films for their touring programme. There has also been an emergence of a self-organised group called the Moving Image Filmmakers Collective. It is a group of around 20 members, and 300 Facebook members, who meet in a supportive environment to encourage local filmmaking. Alchemy provide support to the group but do not control their activity.

A main challenge faced has been getting volunteers involved and then being able to resource and sustain them over the course of the year long programme. Key to this has been building relationships and establishing working partners within the community.

Using disused spaces has tied the festival to the town and creates instant temporary regeneration, it is where Alchemy and Hawick meet and bring life back into the town. Engaging with young people has had a positive impact, offering new experiences and opening them up to new ways of thinking.

Transferrable lessons;

- Resist pressure to dilute, don't compromise on the quality of the work.
- There will always be common values and aims, even with people who aren't interested in the work e.g. regenerating the town, increasing pride of place, youth engagement.
- Local PR and lobbying – need to spend time engaging with people and investing in this as it helps with funding.

- Community engagement is very important and requires a full time post. You need to forge strong links and develop a long-term volunteer strategy.

Presenters:

- *Karen Gateson, Trustee, Alchemy Film and Arts*
- *Richard Ashrowan, Creative Director, Alchemy Film and Arts*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and questions raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

Do you tailor your focus to meet funder requirements?

- Identify a need and then find funders to fit that community need. Means then you are not reliant on one source.
- Tell different stories to different funders. You can often tell the same story but in different ways.
- Can be challenging to tell a grassroots story for a big international event.
- Need to demonstrate the impact on the local community.

How did you bridge the gap between the work and initial local reaction? (to Alchemy)

- Held a test screening in an off road generator shed. 30 people showed up which demonstrated that there was a hunger for this sort of thing.
- The artistic community came first and then others came through different channels.
- This has created networks. Participants become audiences, youth participation draws in families.
- Active invitation to the community and active outreach, the role of volunteers is key to this.
- Don't dilute or change what you are doing. Communities have the capacity to take on new ideas.

Have you been able to quantify impact on the local economy and services?

- Cateran – 80% of takings went into community organisations and local businesses.
- Local hotels and restaurants have seen increased bookings over the course of the film festival. There is a need to look beyond existing partners and develop a Hawick brand.

Have you measured the economic impact beyond the town?

- Alchemy measures impact as part of their evaluation of the festival. There is around a £300 community spend per visitor. People appreciate what the festival brings to the town, even if it is not the norm, as it brings social and economic benefits.
- The balance between local and international artists that RIG use is around a 60/40 split. Sometimes the skills required do not exist within the community and they have to look further afield.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF partners:

Creative Scotland and the Cultural Enterprise Office

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Creative Scotland](#)

The Scottish Government Cultural Strategy Consultation is asking people to think deeply about how arts could be supported and nurtured. What kind of country are we? How do we culturally engage?

Arts and creativity have a positive impact on regeneration. It diversifies the economy and creates jobs, recognises the aesthetics of place and increases social impact. Regeneration is a deep and complex societal issue; there are limits to what culture can do. It is part of a bigger jigsaw, one part of a complex picture. There is more that we can do. All of the SURF Award categories have a cultural element, although it is not always recognised or promoted.

There are ongoing hierarchy and constructive discussions around how Creative Scotland should operate. Things shouldn't be done top down; approaches should be responsive to the local context and priorities. All paces are different with different needs.

There needs to be acknowledgement that regeneration will take time and will not happen overnight. You have to be realistic. Creative projects can change dramatically due to local priorities etc. so Creative Scotland needs to be flexible and open to that changing climate.

Creative Scotland provides broader advice, help for local government and support to groups beyond funding. They have a role to provide support, not just to the projects they fund but to arts and creativity in general. They have to get out and see people and play a part in wider local democracy.

Presenters:

- *Gary Cameron, Head of Place, Partnership and Communities, Creative Scotland*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Cultural Enterprise Office](#)

The Cultural Enterprise Office are currently in a transition period due to a cut in funding. They were formed for creatives by creatives and provide support to aspiring cultural entrepreneurs. They provide a space for them come and talk about their business challenges etc.

What they have learned from running services for cultural enterprises is that creatives are brilliant entrepreneurs. They are mainly one person operations, who are always reimagining. They don't start businesses to make money but often just to meet a creative desire, often without a sustainable plan. Despite that, creativity has the power to address problems within communities and has a vast economic impact.

Creative businesses are often on the back foot when they enter into discussions as they want to get the job, so are not always realistic as to what is achievable. Arts businesses grow organically, at a small scale, and with less public funding available it makes it a difficult context to work within. The CEO provide direct advice or links to a network of specialist advisers. How information is produced is important to artists. Taking a visual approach is key when working with creative businesses. Language can often be a barrier to negotiations as they are not familiar with business terminology.

The Starter for 6 programme offers understanding of intellectual property requirements for business start-ups. It is an 8 week course which costs £125 and offers the opportunity to work through a business plan. The CEO have worked in universities to give students access to tools, such as business plan development, to develop their skills prior to graduating.

The main problem for the future development of creative industries is how to innovate and work whilst public funding reduces.

Presenter:

- David Smith, Programme Director, Cultural Enterprise Office

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and topics of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

Visionaries lead programmes and projects. How do we protect those individuals and what can be done for succession planning?

- It's about being flexible and about trust. It is a difficult task as it is reliant on dynamic individuals giving up their time.
- Need to work with various organisations to provide that support. It is not just up to one organisation to provide a supporting role.

There is a threat of burnout for smaller organisations. There is a need for mutual support organisations. How can we connect visionaries to provide support?

- It is difficult to get steady income to allow for expansion.
- This can be more difficult to achieve in small towns as there is not enough infrastructure to provide necessary support.
- You need a physical space for people to come together and meet and share ideas. An example of Fleet Collective in Dundee was given. Providing a meeting space was enough to start collective working. This has since gone out of business due to rates going up due to the opening of the V+A. However, informal connections have still been forged.

Issues around socio-economic barriers to the arts in areas of multiple deprivation. There are limited opportunities in these areas for local people to get into the arts. They do not have spare time or 'sweat equity'. We ask people to volunteer and they deliver professional results but the problems in the area remain the same. It creates a vicious cycle and fails to overcome barriers to socio-economic change. There is a need for long-term impacts rather than short-term.

- There are long-term results of engaging young people in these sorts of projects. This creates a ripple effect into the wider community.
- The link between volunteer work and economic development, build relationships to add value and create jobs. There is often disconnect between the two, and that needs to be overcome.
- Are there opportunities for young volunteers to engage with after the project finishes? We need to connect things up.
- There is a degree to which it is a case of simply holding people together and providing something good for the community, or whether arts can reverse long term socio-economic decline.
- The Government is emphasising the community led regeneration model, but is that enough based on current resources to create economic development?
- No one wants to live in a 'regeneration area', they want to be able to provide.
- Is this a holding place or is it a new grassroots approach to regeneration?
- There is a need to work to get people to see the benefits of arts to community.

- There is a need for networks to share knowledge and ideas. There should be a system where the benefits of volunteering are made explicit and volunteer hours can be used when providing evidence to the job centre and potential employers.

3) Successful Approaches to Regenerating Scotland's Places

With introductory presentations from SURF Award winning projects:

The Irvine Vision and Ulva Ferry Housing Project

About the event

The final workshop in the series highlighted the 2017 SURF Award Winner of both the Scotland's Most Improved Place category and the newly introduced Housing category.

The projects featured at the workshop varied in size and in setting, but are both using investment in infrastructure and community engagement as tools to regenerate their local communities.

The half-day workshop took place on the 31st May 2018 in The Townhouse in Irvine. The event featured presentations from project managers and input from SURF Award partners, namely Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The subsequent open discussion was concluded with a networking lunch for the 48 participants.

First Presentation Summary: [The Irvine Vision](#)

Irvine is a large town in North Ayrshire with a population of around 39k. It received New Town status in 1966. It struggles with depopulation, with an original population of around 100k. The New Town saw ambitious development plans but has since seen a decline in industry and rising levels of unemployment. There are increasing issues with incoming overflow population from Glasgow, low skills and endemic poverty.



North Ayrshire Council has responded by investing in town centre jobs and working with the community to meet their needs. They are looking to bring activity back into the town centre and encourage non retail activity to sit alongside and support the retail offer. The development of the £18m Portal leisure centre led to the controversial decision to close the existing Magnum Centre, which had once made Irvine a go to destination. Visitor numbers were in decline and maintenance costs were increasing but still the

decision to close the much loved community asset led to a divide within the community. The new facility, in the heart of the community, has seen a rise in visitor numbers, due to its accessibility, but the legacy of the Magnum lives on in community feeling.

The £11m development of Bridgeway House and upgraded public realm allowed for 400 council staff to relocate to the town centre and provided support to the town centre shops and services. £1m CARS investment was also made to upgrade the nearby Trinity Church and offer a small grants scheme.

The planned next steps include a £3m investment in further improvements to the public realm to link Bridgeway with the Portal centre. This is being supported by Sustrans, among other partners. An £8.5m investment has to be made in the Quarry Road facility, which will combine a £3m investment

in business units, £5.4m in a sports facility and the remainder is being considered for the relocation of the health centre to create a health hub. It has taken 4 years to get to stage one of the development, this is due to having to relocate people and redevelop vacant and derelict land. This was funded through the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

The Council had considered the purchase of the River Gate Shopping Centre, which is an essential asset to the town centres future, and would have given the Council greater control over town centre decisions and the centres future redevelopment. The purchase would have generated a surplus of around £1m per year, which could have been re-invested in further regeneration once the debt was paid off. They lost by one vote, councillors from outside Irvine voted against the purchase, although there was strong political support within the town.

£12.5m has been invested in jobs and developing a designated Enterprise Area. The Council have been focussing on community engagement, on the back of the distrust which built around the decision to close the Magnum Centre, and have formed a local partnership for community investment. The locality partnership has a budget for community projects.

North Ayrshire struggles with political issues, with splits between Irvine and the rest of the council. They also require more support from the Scottish Government. They are struggling to find potential project applicants for the RCGF as their emphasis is focussed on community led regeneration. Projects are not forthcoming from the community; the Council still needs to take the lead. There are also limits on procurement etc. that come from being a local authority rather than an external regeneration company.

Presenter:

- *Alasdair Laurenson, Senior Manager (Regeneration), North Ayrshire Council*

Second Presentation Summary: Ulva Ferry Housing Project

Ulva Ferry is a dispersed community on the west coast of Mull with a population of 115. They face a major problem with population decline due to the lack of affordable housing. Holiday homes make up a third of the housing stock in the area and houses are highly priced, with little rental options. This has led to people moving from the area or living in caravans or bothys.

In 2010, the local primary school faced closure, having only 4 pupils. The school was seen to be the heart of the community, with no other community centre or public meeting space. This mobilised the local community to campaign to save the school. They set up the Ulva School Community Association who carried out community need surveys and started to look for affordable land on which to build.

The survey led to a proposal to build two affordable family homes. They looked to the more established Mull and Iona Community Trust, which had capacity to apply for grant funding, to provide support and help to manage the process.

The process took a long time due to a number of barriers. Ascertaining local housing need proved difficult as not many people register for affordable housing waiting lists in the area. There were a number of budget and planning challenges due to the remote location, there were increased build costs and the scenic location proved tricky for planning approval. Large scale fundraising raised £22k, plus an anonymous donation of £25k was made. A grant from the Scottish Land Fund was used to purchase the land from the local farmer.

Thorne Wyness Architects were appointed to oversee the design of the build. Due to the location and widespread fuel poverty in the area, the design had to tackle existing challenges and work with the remote location. The houses were built to an eco-design, using recyclable materials. Panels were pre-made for assembly on site. The build was completed in 9 months.

In 2017, 2 three bedroom affordable houses were completed and two families, each with three children moved in. Heating costs are as low as £300 per year and they offer mid-market affordable tenancy rates. They are managed by a private landlord but have a social housing ethos. Allocation policy was a very emotive process locally. A robust and objective point based system was put in place that would meet the needs of the local community. There were 18 enquiries and 8 applications made for the housing. No community members were involved in the allocation process; it was run by West Highland HA.



The project has been community led from the outset, which means it is not always easy to reach consensus or to reach those who have not previously engaged.

Continued perception is that there is no housing need, access to land is essential. They were the first recipients of Rural and Island Housing Fund, which takes increased build costs into account. There is a risk perception by Housing Associations in investing in rural and remote locations. This is where community led solutions are coming to the fore. The project has led to a 30% increase in funding coming into the area and a 10% increase in the number of adults living in the community.

There is a continued need and desire within the community for more housing. An application has gone in to the Scottish Land Fund to buy another plot of land to build more affordable housing and increase the offer of Ulva Ferry.

Presenter:

- *Helen MacDonald, Local Development Officer, Mull and Iona Community Trust*

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and questions raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

Following the reaction to the decision to close the Magnum, would the Council change the way in which the carried out the consultation if they were doing it now?

- There is a new setup for carrying out community engagement. The decision should have been communicated first rather than introducing the new centre development.
- The position of the Portal is not ideal due to the lack of parking and a further car park is now not feasible.

Why are the community not coming forth with community projects for the RCGF?

- It is down to the type of projects the RCGF are looking for. Irvine has a problem with community development.

- Successful small community projects are not sure what they have to offer to the RCGF. It is not obvious to them.

Can you tell me more about Irvine's locality planning?

- There are 5 locality planning areas, each led by a different Director within the Council.
- They have representation from local people, retailers etc.
- £2.6m has to be distributed throughout the localities. How much each area receives is based on size, demographics etc. This is for capital funding.

How did Ulva Ferry utilise as many local suppliers as possible with procurement regulations and getting good value for money?

- Went through Public Procurement Scotland and asked local suppliers to tender.

Is there ability for Housing Associations to respond to rural, small scale housing projects?

- There is not as much being done in Scotland. This is down to housing stock size.
- It is about intelligent use of existing resources.
- Discussion had with West Highland HA to develop the housing but they did not want the ownership.

Additional presentations were provided by SURF partners:

Scottish Government, Scotland's Towns Partnership and Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Third Presentation Summary: Scottish Government

The work carried out by these SURF Award projects could not be a better reflection of the current SG policy on place-based regeneration. The Regeneration Strategy is not a single policy within one area of government. There has been a definite shift from the 'one size fits all' model to more holistic place-based solutions. Place is at the centre of work across government, surrounded by partnerships and people.

Regeneration has to be community led, integrated and holistic. Place-based approaches are becoming embedded at all levels, providing multipurpose, multi-level solutions. SG are now looking at the implementation of a Place-Based Principal. They are working with the Corra Foundation on an Autumn Conference.

Inclusive Growth allows everyone to contribute and benefit. The Community Empowerment Act allows communities the opportunity to take ownership of their local assets and have a greater say in decision making at a local level. There is an abundance of energy, creativity and talent within our communities.

The SG offers a variety of funding for different purposes. Including;

- **Empowering Communities Fund** - Supports communities through multiple stages of development, from capacity building through to project development. It is open to a wide range of holistic proposals. This includes the People and Communities Fund, Aspiring Communities, Community Choices (Participatory Budgeting) Fund and funding for charettes.
- **Regeneration Capital Grant Fund** – Supports large scale infrastructure projects. It has funded a lot of development in Irvine.
- **Vacant and Derelict Land Fund**

- **SPRUCE** – Offers loan funding to large scale infrastructure projects.

SG funding often helps to bring other funders to the table. They work with a number of Third Sector support agencies such as SURF, DTAS, HIE and SCDC, to help identify and support communities. Sharing best practice and learning from what works.

The Scottish Government work closely with Scotland's Towns Partnership to promote and embed the Town Centre First Principle, which considers the vibrancy of town centres as the first priority. Irvine town centre has adopted the Town Centre First Principle, which has helped to set priorities for development.

There has been a recent evolution of the BIDS (Business Improvement Districts) model, with a move to allow communities and partners a more strategic opportunity to contribute to the model. Creating closer links between the community and the business sector.

Presenter:

- *Susan Bolt, Regeneration and Towns Policy Manager, Scottish Government*

Fourth Presentation Summary: [Scotland's Towns Partnership](#)

The well publicised closure of high street shops due to changing shopping trends has led to a change in the way we see and use our town centres. The 2013 [Town Centre Review](#) highlighted that successful town centres and town centre networks are key to Scotland's success. They are essential for a wide range of areas, such as non-traditional retail, business, transport and town centre living. The Scottish Government Town Centre Action Plan, and subsequent Town Centre First Principle, has been useful in provoking discussion around decision making within our towns.

STP were formally launched in 2014 as an independent body, funded by SG, to bring together all of partners that have relevance to town centre regeneration. They are a go to resource for town centres and have a varied membership. They offer advice and support and a range of toolkits to help towns better understand how they fit into the wider network. The Understanding Scottish Places Toolkit allows towns to compare themselves to similar towns and to tap into data.

The Town Centre Audit looks at town centres in relation to key themes. It allows you to test the health of your town centre. This information can then be mapped into the Place Standard Tool which highlights issues that you should prioritise and focus on.

STP partner with the Herald Media Platform to showcase and highlight good examples of town centre projects in a Sunday Herald monthly pullout.

Presenter:

- *Jill Cronin, Strategic Director, Scotland's Towns Partnership*

Fifth Presentation Summary: [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#)

HIE have a different setup to Scottish Enterprise in their breadth of powers related to community development. The new agency set up in the South of Scotland will be similar to HIE. At present they are assisting with the setup of an interim agency that will pave the way for the new organisation. HIE have been doing place-based regeneration for 50 years, integrating economic and community development to address wide level decline. They have a role to nurture place-based working and make it more effective. Success is seen in places where communities have a common vision for the place and get together to support this and drive it forward.

Place-based describes a wide spectrum of approaches from small specific projects to bigger transformational change. The power of a really good place-based approach is when you get business, community and public parties working with the local authority. There is a need for all parties to be involved. You need to establish boundaries and know who needs to be included. All of the relevant actors need to be engaged. The true power of place-based approaches is effective collaboration.

In Dornoch, the abattoir site had blighted progress but they are now looking to re-develop it and bring more jobs into the area. In Fort William there was threat of closure of the aluminium smelter but a new investor came in and the site is now expanding. There has been a rebalancing of the economy as the area moves forward. Threats can trigger collaboration.

Presenter:

- Neil Ross, Head of Community Growth Team, HIE

Open Discussion

Some of the main comments and areas of debate raised are listed below. These varied views and opinions do not necessarily represent the views of SURF or all of the people and organisations present at the workshop.

Is it possible to have BIDS for an island rather than just a town?

- BIDS are not specific to towns. There are also themed BIDS focusing on tourism etc. An island BID would work well.

Could there be greater flexibility in working environments? Cutting back on the wasted time spent commuting between home and work?

Could there be a Town Centre 2nd approach which looks at housing levy etc. to make places more attractive?

- Need to think on issues such as; how regeneration is supported by transport and how we promote town centre living.
- Co-working spaces closer to home to free up time that could then be given to involvement in a local community group etc.
- The SG are adopting elements of a neutral working approach.
- STP has no base which is fantastic. It is a culture change. The more opportunity there is for co-working spaces the better. Improves work/life balance.

We need to look at other uses for vacant units in town centres and the scale and viability of bringing housing back into town centres.

- Green Infrastructure Fund – more money for large urban areas.
- The Derelict Land Fund – is there an intention to widen this out beyond the 6 local authority areas that it currently covers? There is a significant problem across Scotland and the fund is only available to certain areas. – Susan responded that she hasn't heard that it has to be expanded.

How does STP define a town?

- Defined by population size at present.
- Looking at whether this needs to be altered.

Final Remarks:

- The Whithorn Trust highlighted the launch of their long distance walking route from Glasgow Cathedral, which goes through Irvine. It is a 10 day walking tour which links urban centres to the countryside. It is called the Whithorn Way.
- Social Infrastructure has no cash sum against it in the same way capital projects do. Paisley builds in 10% of funds for building social infrastructure.

End of paper

Emma Scott, Information, Communications and Events Officer, with additional information provided by Christopher Murray, Research and Administrative Assistant.

10th August 2018

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