



STREET CULTURE
FOR REGIONS

REGIONAL ALLIANCE ACTION PLAN 102

East Belfast Enterprise

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 EU Strategic Context

Street culture has grown exponentially in recent years, driven by the mainstreaming of youth culture and the revitalization of urban areas. From street art to food trucks, pop-up markets to cutting-edge fashion and sport, street culture is any commercial activity that takes place outside "on the streets" and contains the creative forces that can mould lifestyles and drive the economy.

So recent is the phenomenon that few statistics are available. However, videographers, performance artists, street food vendors and artisan craft producers form a substantial segment of the micro-enterprise sector that create urban culture opportunities and awareness of street culture as a means to make a living. In the EU there is growing recognition that "tangible and intangible cultural assets are a means of developing comparative advantage in an increasingly competitive marketplace, and to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalisation: (OECD, The Impact of Culture on Tourism, 2009)

As stated by MEP Silvia Costa, "Cultural and creative sectors naturally contribute to youth employment and to social cohesion". This is even more true of urban cultures which 'have a social role due to their working-class backgrounds' (salto-youth.net).

However, despite the fact that "innovation in the cultural and creative sectors is an important element of development" (EC Europa. Culture in Cities webpage) there is limited awareness and even less support for street culture. Investments in culture still focus on "high" culture or tangible cultural heritage sites, rather than intangible modern culture. In addition, the narrow characterization of street culture in criminology and anthropology has been damaging and ignores "the relevance of street culture to numerous aspects of contemporary culture and commerce: (Ross, Jeffry. Reframing Urban Street Culture, 2018)

It is not surprising, then, that street culture is largely absent from entrepreneurship education across the EU. Partners in this project's own-country research confirms that 85% of vocational entrepreneurship education focuses on traditional business sectors and "start-a-business" courses are dominated by middle-class achievers, with high-school and even university education. As the EU report "Entrepreneurship Education: Road to Success" (2015) highlighted, "One size training does not fit all.



Approaches to entrepreneurship education need to be adjusted to age groups, subjects and educational sectors."

Acknowledging this context, this project will aim to enhance training and qualifications for all, because our principal target group are low-skilled people and potential entrepreneurs in urban areas. Under-employment and unemployment are well above the EU average in Greece, France, Portugal and of concern in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Denmark (Eurostat), especially in our cities. However, some people experience greater barriers to accessing education than others. The Street Culture for Regions project (SCR) specifically targets NEETs and those from migrant backgrounds, who find themselves excluded from formal education because of specific entrance requirements, or complex social barriers such as discrimination, language proficiency, low confidence or other social norms. We recognize that current entrepreneurship education struggles to attract and retain these groups and will create a new model of how to teach business start-up and growth within street culture, to make vocational training more accessible and attractive to those operating in today's urban, street culture.

1.2 What is the Street Culture for Regions Project?

Street culture is a rapidly evolving area of economic activity and includes urban arts and creative industries (e.g. pop culture), fashion, food, tourism and more, all of which offer opportunities for innovative, entrepreneurial start-ups. However, given its informal roots and sometimes negative connotations, it has not been "on the radar" for focused enterprise development. Street Culture for Regions (SCR) will change this by guiding and equipping entrepreneurship education providers to make the most of street culture opportunities for skills' development and economic and social inclusion in our cities and regions.

Street Culture for Regions (SCR) will make a compelling and very tangible contribution to SOCIAL INCLUSION. By using the relatability and attractiveness of street culture as a potential business area, we will bring those on the margins of society - NEETs, those from ethnic minorities or migrant backgrounds, and those from deprived neighbourhoods - into both entrepreneurship training and meaningful economic activity.

1.3 Who is Involved?



The Street Culture for Regions programme is trans-national, with partners in the UK, Republic of Ireland, France, Poland, Greece, Portugal and Denmark. The purpose of bringing these partners together was to research the subject from the different perspectives and situations in each of these member countries and share knowledge and learning across the partners, which can be brought to a local context through regional alliances established in each member country. The following partners have been involved from each of these countries:

- a) UK: EAST BELFAST ENTERPRISE (EBE) has led the project and been responsible for Project Management and Progress, Quality and Impact Evaluation. This includes the co-ordination of all project activities to ensure optimal collaboration, timely delivery of outputs and achievement of quality criteria.
- b) Ireland: MOMENTUM (MMS) has co-led (with French partner Le Laba) the development of 101 Opportunities in Street Culture Resource Pack. Momentum is the organisation with the most experience at the crossroads of entrepreneurship and social inclusion, and expertise in train-the-trainer approaches, they are best placed to produce a persuasive yet practical set of resources that responds to the needs of our target groups.
- c) France: Le Laba is a competence centre and can reach out to its ten constituent networks of operators in the field of cultural industries to source materials. In collaboration with Momentum, they have co-led the development of 101 Opportunities in Street Culture Resource Pack. Le Laba will also develop and host the LEARNING ACTIVITY given their central location, extensive facilities and experience both in train-the-trainers approaches and their first-hand knowledge of the final target groups. They step up to new responsibilities in this project, to take on a leading role in dissemination, given their credibility in urban cultural entrepreneurship and strong national and European networks.
- d) Poland: The University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz (AHE) has led 102 Alliances & Action Plans. They have been highly engaged in the City of Lodz's transformation from a once industrial city now reinvigorated by a focus on the arts, culinary diversity and edgy cultural activity infused with technology e.g. 30 street art. AHE bring first-hand experience of best practice in a city's revitalization of its downtown area, and as a knowledge-based organisation, understand the role of an honest broker in establishing cross-sectoral collaboration.
- e) Greece: EDRA Scamg Social Cooperative Activities for Minority Groups have co-led (with the Portuguese partner, IPP) the development of the third intellectual output: Open Education Resources for Street Culture Entrepreneurship. EDRA's on-the-ground experience of working with



marginalized groups in society will make sure the framework stays relevant to the learning processes and skills development of those from low-skilled backgrounds.

- f) Portugal: Instituto Politecnico do Porto (IPP) has co-led (with the Greek partner, EDRA) the development of the third intellectual output: Open Education Resources for Street Culture Entrepreneurship. The Porto team bring expertise in applied cultural innovation for commercial purposes and as educators themselves, understand the types of materials that educators need.
- g) Denmark: European E-Learning Institute (EUEI) will create and lead participation in the testing of 104: Street Culture Entrepreneurship App. Their staff have over 15 years of experience in online and now mobile learning and they will combine strong pedagogic and assessment insights with technologic expertise to create an engaging, user-friendly app. As the creators of the project website and skilled in emarketing, they have also led Online Dissemination aspects.

1.4 Key Objectives

SCR has been carefully designed to produce a series of results which deliver positive outcomes in terms of skills development for potential entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship educators, as well as boosting our capacity for innovation and inclusion within our wider vocational education system.

In this context, our project has a clear aim: to introduce a brand new programme of enterprise skills development in the field of street culture entrepreneurship. Our objectives and target groups are:

- a) Raise the motivation and knowledge of 200+ VET LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS to offer opportunities for street culture entrepreneurship and to work inter-sectorally to provide joined up support. This responds to VET and economic development stakeholders that want to boost entrepreneurial innovation, social inclusion and urban revitalization in a context of increasing cultural diversity and need guidance on how to harness street culture across the public and private sectors for these purposes.
- b) Equip 400+ VET EDUCATORS to introduce effective street culture entrepreneurship training in their organisations in the short term. VET educators and leaders wish to achieve better outcomes with hard-to-reach groups, but this cannot be achieved with old-school generic start-



a-business courses. They need relevant up-to-date knowledge, effective digital tools and engaging pedagogic approaches that build entrepreneurial skills appropriate for contemporary urban environments.

c) Develop the business skills of 250+ NEW ENTREPRENEURS who are normally alienated from VET because of their low-skills background or status as NEETs or migrants. As a low-capital venture that requires cultural identity and organic digital marketing, street culture businesses are ideally suited for them, but they need customised flexible training that builds their confidence and skills to move forward as entrepreneurs.



2.0 The UK Regional Alliance

2.1 Introduction

The overall objective of Street Culture Entrepreneurship Alliances & Action Plans is to implement the mechanisms for sustainable collaboration between organisations and stakeholders so that the new entrepreneurs who improve their skills can find a supportive environment for the development of their street culture businesses.

The output fits into the wider ethos of the project by recognising that complex problems such as the upskilling (through VET) and inclusion of everyone in our society necessarily requires more holistic approaches than can be achieved on our own. For this reason, the target group is specifically the leaders and decision-makers of stakeholder organisations in VET, economic development, cultural innovation and social inclusion.

The specific objectives of the Alliances are to:

- Build awareness of the value of practical collaboration in this field
- Enable knowledge sharing to enrich and better support skills' development in the field of street culture entrepreneurship.
- Guide the participating organisations to agree and commit to concrete actions to support street culture entrepreneurship in their city
- Learn from the approach, document it and share it to encourage other cities to follow suit.

Each Alliance will deliver two clear results:

- a) A collaborative structure in which organisations with different approaches, priorities and needs can share knowledge and plan their activities to complement, rather than compete, with others. These organisations currently work in silos or very narrow collaboration formats e.g. culture only, enterprise only, education only.
- b) A dynamic Action Plan to include directories of organisations and services, areas of responsibility, commitments to actions and service provision, and guidelines on evaluation.

A third overall {collective} result will be the creation of:

- c) A guide presenting the structure, working practices and results of the



Alliance to orient and encourage other organisations to create an alliance in their own city/region.

2.2. A Guide to Establishing the UK Regional Alliance

In developing the UK Regional Alliance, a 6 step process was followed. This process is outlined here to offer a practical guide to establishing a regional alliance, which can be followed by other organisations to create an alliance in their own city or region.

The steps that were followed in establishing the UK Regional alliance are set out as follows:

- Step 1: Planning the Process
- Step 2: Establishing the Regional Alliance
- Step 3: Defining the Region
- Step 4: Identifying Current Initiatives, Programmes and Strategies and Possible Gaps and Needs
- Step 5: Action Planning and Implementation
- Step 6: Sustaining the Alliance

A more detailed explanation of the process explains how the UK Regional Alliance was established and operated.

Step 1: Planning the process

This is the initial stage. It is characterized by the development, gathering and analysis of collective insights. At this stage, the Alliance is not developed and the initial stakeholders have not been identified. In order to identify who should be involved, it is important to be clear about the purpose of the Alliance and what is expected to be achieved. A useful process to follow is a traditional strategic planning process:

Vision/Mission/Objectives/Strategies or Programmes/Actions

Vision

The Vision is a clear statement of what you want to achieve through the work of the Alliance. This enables stakeholders to commit to this shared vision and hence provides a focus for the Alliance. The vision for the UK Alliance established in East Belfast was articulated as “To improve entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities for those involved in street culture, contributing to local economic growth”



Mission

The mission is the stated purpose of the Alliance. In the case of the UK Alliance this was “To develop a range of interventions that will enhance opportunities for those involved in street culture”

Objectives

Once the initial Alliance is formed, the group should be facilitated to develop its own objectives to guide the work of the alliance. Objectives should be focused on achieving the mission and be measurable, so that progress can be charted and results presented. Objectives generally lay out what will be achieved and by when and progress in achieving the objectives is tracked through delivery of a series of action plans. The objectives set for the UK Alliance are described in section 2.3 of this document.

Strategies or Programmes

The strategies or programmes are the mechanisms that will be adopted by the Alliance to achieve its objectives. In developing the strategy, it is about identifying how the Partnership will achieve its objective, what resources it will require (people, money, power/influence, materials, premises etc.), what the timeframe will be and what structure will be adopted to deliver the strategy. In the UK Alliance, this was led and co-ordinated by East Belfast Enterprise, with resources (premises, staff) provided to the Alliance on a pro-bono basis to establish the initial action plan and use further meetings to monitor progress and build further actions to deliver work of the Alliance.

Actions

The actions are the specific steps that need to be delivered the strategy, which in turn achieves the

Useful Aspects to Consider when developing a Regional Alliance:

- Identify the stakeholders.
- Communicate with them.
- Set meetings.
- Identify if all potential stakeholders are represented – allow the Alliance to be “fluid”
- Do any of the potential stakeholders have any previous experience of working together – build on shared experience?
- Are there any historical or traditional barriers between the potential stakeholders? – be aware of potential conflicts
- Is any jargon or technical language used that could be a barrier? – use simple language
- How do stakeholders feel about establishing an Alliance?
- Are there any barriers to developing a common vision?
- Engage stakeholders in defining the region
- Be clear about the benefits to stakeholders from involvement in the Alliance
- Secure commitment to the work of the Alliance
- Develop an action plan and timeline for each step and those responsible

the

taken to
objectives to



deliver on the mission. The Regional Alliances should develop their own action plan relevant to their own region, which outlines clearly the what/who/when aspects of the work:

- What will happen?
- Who is responsible for making it happen?
- When will it be completed?

In addition to the What/Who/When elements of the action plan, the plan will also need to clarify what resources are required, what resources are available, what the perceived or actual barriers are to delivering the actions and if there are any other organisations or people who could collaborate to deliver or facilitate delivery of the plan. In the SCR programme, each Regional Alliance will publish its own action plan and these will be available to download from the project website at <https://www.street-culture.eu/>

The planning process is a fluid process and the development of the Regional Alliance should not be viewed as a rigid structure, but rather as a collaborative forum which can engage different partners throughout the process in developing and delivering the action plan. In an effective Alliance, there will be a cycle of programme/strategy development and delivery, leading to new programmes and further initiatives, which will tap into the networks and resources of new partners in an ever evolving process – this “fluidity” contributes to the sustainability of the work of the Alliance, where new partners bring new energy and new ideas.

Further details of the actions developed and progressed by the UK Alliance are outlined in section 3 of this document.

Identifying key stakeholders

To start the Alliance building process, it is necessary to identify the initial stakeholders who will establish the Alliance. There are a number of ways in which this can be done, but the best starting point is from your own networks and contacts. In advance of contacting potential stakeholders, it is important to be clear about the overall purpose of the Alliance and it may be helpful to conduct some initial consultation with a reference group, to assist in identifying which stakeholders should be approached. This can be done by hosting a “partnership building” meeting, where a number of contacts from within your own database are invited to meet to discuss the programme and identify individuals and/or organisations of relevance to the programme, who should be invited to form the initial Regional Alliance.

Important questions to be answered for key stakeholder identification:

1. *Who are the key stakeholders in relation to the SCR Vision/Mission?*



2. *What is their role in relation to street culture?*
3. *What is their level of power/influence? (i.e. prioritise the stakeholders)*
4. *What relationships/links exist between the key stakeholders?*

Note of Advice:

To ensure that your effort is valued in the community, consider inviting key *external* representatives, who have influence and credibility in the community, for example:

- Community activists
- Owner and Executives of Businesses or corporations
- Nonprofit organisations or foundations
- Higher education institutes
- Other groups (schools, religious organisations etc.)

5. *What current programmes have been developed for or by each stakeholder?*

6. *What type of organisation is each programme aimed at?*

7. *What is their perceived level of success?*

8. *What are the strategy gaps in relation to SCR and which stakeholders can bring knowledge to address these gaps?*

9. *What are the programme gaps in relation to SCR and which*

stakeholders can bring knowledge to address these gaps?

10. *Are there any duplication in the key stakeholders' roles, strategies and programmes?*

A summary of the key stakeholders, with an overview of their roles in strategy formulation, programme development and implementation and impact on creation of the Regional Alliance can then be recorded and prioritized to draft the initial list of invites to the first Partnership meeting.

To establish the UK Regional Alliance, East Belfast Enterprise took the lead and identified contacts from within their own networks, who have involvement in street culture, local festivals, community work, funders, the Local Authority and others with statutory responsibilities. A series of meetings was then held with key individuals, to identify other potential partners, who might be interested in joining the Alliance. The opportunity to "sell" the benefits of being involved in the Alliance through initial personal approaches, followed by a formal invitation worked well to attract stakeholders to attend the initial Alliance meeting.

The first meeting of the Alliance was then scheduled and invites issued, which resulted in 9 stakeholder organisations attending the first meeting. At this



meeting, one of the items on the agenda was to identify what other stakeholders might be important to invite to future meetings, so that invites could be issued to encourage additional stakeholders to attend the future meetings. This continued to be discussed at each meeting, to ensure that the fluid approach to partnership was embraced through the Alliance, maximizing the potential of the Alliance to progress actions with real impact and has resulted in a total of 14 stakeholder organisations having been involved in the Alliance to date.

Step2: Establishing the Regional Alliance

This stage of the process is characterized by the success of the effort in establishing a strong and relevant partnership, which commences with the first meeting

Host an Exceptional First Meeting!

First impressions count! It is extremely important to engage stakeholders at the first meeting and get them enthused in the project. Make sure that you pay attention to detail, such as hosting the meeting in the right venue – perhaps a venue which is a location that stakeholders would be interested to visit? Make sure people are welcomed to the meeting and that their attendance is recorded..

The meeting should have an interesting agenda and one that ensures all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute and to feel involved. At the first meeting of the UK Regional Alliance, a presentation was delivered about the project to inform and excite partners about the project.

Set the tone for the meeting, don't be too formal, ensure that participants feel comfortable and able to contribute. In the first UK Regional Alliance meeting, the meeting was hosted by East Belfast Enterprise and all attendees were encouraged to introduce themselves and explain something of what their organisation is involved in. The tone of the meeting was relaxed and informal and the Chair of the meeting ensured the focus was on the attendees and encouraging discussion and debate, to ensure those attending felt engaged and remained interested. At the close of the meeting a number of actions were summarized by the Chair and minutes that had been taken of the meeting were then subsequently shared with all attendees.



Important considerations when establishing the Regional Alliance:

Scope and view of the Alliance – Are the objectives of the Alliance many and overwhelming or few and manageable?

Representation – Have we contacted as many agencies, constituencies, and organizations as we think necessary to solve the problem?

Priorities – What are the priority issues and concerns that are common to all participants in the Alliance?

Accountability – To whom are we accountable? Our organizations, the community and general public, the entrepreneurs, others?

Communication – How are we going to have timely, consistent, useful, and comfortable communication that meets our needs?

Once established the Regional Partnership will have a system for monitoring of planned activities including:

Useful Hints:

- Establish communication channels
- Establish partnership working as the “usual way of doing business”.
- Facilitate the development of programmes.
- Revisit representation & structure, add or replace members as required.
- Build on connections and capital.
- Maintain the momentum and vigor of the partnership.
- Seek for grants, look for sponsors.
- Hold social events.

Rules, roles, responsibilities, and duties – All require clarity and may need to be written down.

- *Routine of Alliance* – Are the Alliance operations now settled and embedded in the routines of the participating agencies?

- *Maintain linkages* – Preserve, nurture, and expand the relationships that have been forged.

- *Interim reports* – What “proof” and indicators of partnership success are required? How often is feedback provided and what is its quality?

- *Sustainability* – Plan early for sustainability.



It is also important to maintain momentum with the Alliance and try to ensure that the periods between meetings aren't too long. In the experience of the UK Regional Alliance, this has been an issue. Due to COVID restrictions imposed by the UK Government and COVID infections at critical moments, there were longer gaps between meetings than had been planned and this did provide some challenges with keeping Alliance members fully engaged. To address this, a focus on the actions is important, with direct contact encouraged to members of the Alliance to seek their support for specific actions – this can be done through separate, smaller and sometimes one-to-one meetings, which has worked well for the UK Regional Alliance.

Step 3: Defining the Region

One of the first items on the agenda for the first Regional Alliance meeting should be to define the region that will be the focus of the work of the Alliance. It is important to engage the stakeholders in defining the region, so that they feel a sense of ownership and responsibility to deliver the work of the Alliance to benefit the region that they have defined.

The Regional Alliances may be regarded as a regional or national initiative depending on the partnership's preferences for how they wish to define the region.

Taking a regional rather than national approach may enable a greater depth of analysis into the issues prevalent within that region and bring more localised focus to design interventions around enterprise and new entrepreneurship development, which will have a positive effect in the region.

The learning gained from more localized interventions can then be replicated in a broader scale, thereby enabling the regional approach to act as a pilot for initiatives and interventions that can then be applied on a national and/or trans-national basis.

The region defined for the UK Alliance is further discussed in section 2.5 of this document.

Step 4: Identifying Current Initiatives, Programmes and Strategies and Possible Gaps and Needs

Once the Alliance has been formed, an early action should be to engage partners in the process of mapping current provision across the region that has been defined for the work of the Alliance. In the mapping exercise, partners are encouraged to contribute from their own knowledge and, using secondary sources, identify current support programmes in relation to social enterprise,



entrepreneurship, enterprise and social innovation as well as street culture activity in the region, to help to identify any gaps in provision.

It will be important that consultations in each region are held with a range of stakeholders, including policy makers from Government agencies, local councils, local business development/enterprise organizations, influencers from trade associations, community organisations, membership bodies and support providers, as well as practitioners in street culture, who comprise the target demographic to be supported through the SCR project.

To progress this mapping work, Alliances should undertake research utilising both secondary and primary sources, from information accessible across the stakeholders involved in the Alliance. The research completed by the UK Regional Alliance is included in more detail in section 2.6, which presents the work of the UK Regional Alliance. The research is conducted to identify gaps and needs, which can be addressed through actions taken forward in the Alliance action plan. The action plan is a live document and drives the activity of the Alliance. It is constantly evolving and changing as actions are completed and new actions identified. The current action plan for the UK Regional Alliance is shown in section 3 of this document.

Step 5: Action Planning and Implementation

In our experience, it is important to establish a structure to the Alliance, whereby there is a lead partner chairing meetings and coordinating the activities of the Alliance. In the SCR programme, this lead partner role was provided in each participating country by the project partner from that country and so in the UK Regional Alliance, the lead partner was East Belfast Enterprise.

At the outset of the development of the regional Alliance, the lead partner then needs to outline the level of commitment that will be required from the partners. In the SCR UK Regional Alliance, there have been three meetings held to March 2022, with expectation for at least three more before the end of the funded programme, in December 2022.

Through the meetings to date a number of actions have been agreed, with some actions progressed and closed between one meeting and the next, whilst other actions are added at subsequent meetings and some actions are ongoing.

Between full Alliance meetings there have been ongoing bi-lateral meetings between partners and with other, associate stakeholders and advisors. On occasion, sub-groups of the main Alliance have been tasked to work on a particular action that was identified through the main Alliance meeting, to



progress actions between Alliance meetings.

All of the work of the partners is captured and recorded through action-oriented minutes of each partner meeting and reports/presentations providing updates at subsequent meetings. These documents form part of an ongoing action plan for the Alliance and have enabled the lead partner to co-ordinate activities and manage the implementation of the work of the Alliance throughout the process.

It is important not to be too prescriptive about the work of the Alliance from its inception but, rather, to allow the Alliance to evolve organically, but ensure that actions are focused on achieving the Vision and Mission set out by the Alliance at the outset. In our experience, the most interesting and impactful work has been achieved following chaired discussions at the main Alliance meetings, which would generate ideas that were taken forward through bilateral meetings and “task and finish” sub groups of the Alliance, with updates provided at future Alliance meetings.

The current action plan for the UK Regional Alliance is included in section 3 of this document.

Step 6: Sustaining the Alliance

The first series of Alliance meetings should have secured the engagement and commitment of partners to the project. In order to sustain that commitment, partners need to see the work of the Alliance as having a relevance to the work of their own organisation. This can be secured through the action plan, ensuring there are actions which engage partners and motivate them to be involved in completing the actions.

Planning for the future sustainability of the Alliance begins from the first meeting, by identifying long term as well as medium term and short term actions. An essential part of the sustainability is to establish the future structure for Governance of the work of the Alliance. This may be formalised in legal structures, or informal through working groups. The UK Regional Alliance is still working on this aspect and is progressing some actions to underpin future sustainability, such as the establishment of the forum for ongoing exchange of information and advice.



2.3. Objectives of the UK Regional Alliance

The UK regional partnership was formed to support the work of the Trans-national partners within a localised context and in particular to advise on the development of the course curriculum (Intellectual Output 3) and on-line resources (Intellectual Output 4), to identify and agree actions within the local region, which can be delivered to have local impact and underpin the future sustainability of the project and to assist with the dissemination of the key outputs of the programme.

In particular the main aims of the regional partnership can be summarised as:

- To recruit, motivate and involve the relevant regional stakeholders to endorse and agree with the aims of the project
- To work with the regional stakeholders to agree on actions suitable for implementation in the region and to underpin future sustainability of the project
- To develop cross-sectoral relationships and networks within the region to share resources and deliver the key project Intellectual Outputs
- To gain the commitment of the regional stakeholders to delivering actions that will stimulate and support economic activity through street culture

2.4. Membership of the UK Regional Alliance

There have been three meetings of the UK regional Alliance to the end of March 2022, with additional meetings planned before the funded phase of the project completes in December 2022.

The following table provides summary of the stakeholders that have been involved in the Alliance to date:

Organisation	Web Address or Email Contact
Belfast City Council	www.belfastcity.gov.uk
Eastside Partnership	www.eastsidepartnership.com
Eastside Arts	www.eastsidearts.net
Seedhead Arts	www.seedheadarts.com
Bright Umbrella Drama Company	www.brightumbrella.co.uk
Mural Arts	Facebook.com/belfastmuralarts
Street Soccer NI	www.streetsoccerni.org
Urban Villages	www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/urban-villages-initiative
Freelance Consultant	Trf.kerr@gmail.com
East Belfast Enterprise	www.eastbelfast.org



Brian Stratford & Associates	www.brianstratfordassociates.co.uk/
Portview Trade Centre	www.portviewtradecentre.com/
Urban Scale Interventions	www.urbanscaleinterventions.com
Arts and Business NI	www.artsandbusinessni.org.uk/

2.5. Geographic Scope – Defining the UK Region

At the first meeting of the regional alliance held on 7th July 2021, the first members of the regional alliance met to discuss the programme and to define the region in which the programme should be focused. It was agreed that the region should have a local focus and, although drawing on support and networks from across Belfast and beyond, the primary focus should be on the region of East Belfast. This region is an urban community, which has suffered significant decline in the inner city due to a combination of industrial decline and population shift, coupled with the impact of segregated housing and lack of integration within the education sector as a result of the civil conflict in Northern Ireland.

The region comprises a population stated in the last census of 2011 at 92,221. The region is diverse in many ways, with some of the most disadvantaged districts in Northern Ireland located within inner East Belfast, where many social problems are present as often associated with areas of economic inactivity. In outer East Belfast there are some of the most affluent and influential districts of Northern Ireland, including the district in which the Regional parliament is located in the Assembly buildings at Stormont Estate. The diverse nature of this region gives rise to multiple challenges, with low and high academic achievers residing within a short distance of each other. Advantage and disadvantage occupy the same shared space and this can give rise to challenges and conflict. The region is further challenged by the segregation at “peace-lines” in the inner city, where residents from different cultural and political backgrounds are separated by physical walls and where conflict can often occur between these two traditions living at the interface.

Street culture has experienced a significant boom in this region in recent years, fuelled by artisans, performers, artists, local festivals and community events. The character of the region is changing with new mural art replacing previous, divisive artworks associated with Northern Ireland’s troubled past. Innovative initiatives have emerged from street cultural activities, such as Street Soccer NI, to engage marginalised young people and those suffering from homelessness and addictions. A creative hub of artists, artisans and performers has taken residence in the region, within an old, unused college building and this is attracting more creative talent to the region. All of this provides a great opportunity for the SCR project to engage with this initiatives those driving the boom in street culture in the region, to support entrepreneurship and bring economic benefit to the region



and showcase this activity as best practice, as an exemplar for other regions to follow suit.

2.6. The Work of the UK Regional Alliance – Meetings, Actions and Multiplier Events

The Regional Partnership in the UK was convened by East Belfast Enterprise and has been operating through a series of formal meetings of partner members chaired by East Belfast Enterprise. Between meetings there have been other meetings and communications between partners to progress actions agreed at the formal meetings. The following section provides a summary of the main discussions and actions agreed at the full partner meetings, with the actions linked to the action plan table shown in section 3.

Meeting 1 – 07/07/2021 City East Business Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

The first meeting of the UK Regional Alliance was chaired by Jonathan McAlpin, CEO of East Belfast Enterprise who opened the meeting with a presentation to the members about the Street Culture for Regions programme, explaining the programme objectives and the purpose of the Regional Alliance.

Those in attendance at this first meeting were then invited to introduce themselves and explain what interest their organisation has in the area of Street Culture. A facilitated discussion followed, which explored what is meant by “Street Culture”, what support there currently is for this type of activity and who are the key organisations leading this sector. During discussion it was agreed that the work of this UK Regional Alliance should focus on the region of the parliamentary constituency of East Belfast, which is viewed as a region that has experienced significant recent growth in Street Culture.

Stakeholders present agreed to supply information following the meeting, to assist East Belfast Enterprise to compile some research and conduct some mapping of the region, to help to identify where there may be gaps in existing support for the development of street culture and, in particular, entrepreneurship in this sector.

Some key points of note from the meeting were the need for facilities for artists and an idea of advocating that business premises make space available to host “artists in residence”.

Education was viewed as being of primary importance, to encourage people interested in this sector to recognise that there are economic opportunities and that self-employment and entrepreneurship associated with street culture activity can be a viable economic option. It was agreed that stakeholders would share



some case studies, which can be used to provide content for the creation of the first intellectual output that the SCR partners are working on.

A number of suggestions were made by stakeholders of other organisations and individuals, who might benefit from getting involved in the Alliance. East Belfast Enterprise agreed to issue invites to those suggested, to bring them to the next meeting.

A number of actions were agreed from this meeting to be taken forward. These are listed in the Action Plan in section 3 of this document, as actions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Meeting 2 – 13/10/2021 City East Business Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

The second meeting of the UK Regional Alliance was also held in City East Business Centre and chaired by Jonathan McAlpin, CEO of East Belfast Enterprise. A number of new members joined this meeting and were welcomed and encouraged to introduce themselves and the work of their organisations.

Jonathan updated the Alliance members about progress being made on the Street Culture for Regions project and shared a presentation of the case studies that are being incorporated into the first intellectual output, which will be published by the project partners. As a follow up action, the first output and subsequent outputs created will be presented to the Alliance members for review at future meetings.

An issue that emerged from subsequent discussion was the need for greater visibility for this sector, some way of creating a focus on street culture activity, to be able to advocate and give a voice to the sector. The idea of creating an informal forum for ongoing discussion and to be a focal point to activate on behalf of those involved in street culture was suggested and it was agreed to progress this as an action, which could underpin future sustainability of the SCR project activity.

The need for space was reiterated, which includes studio space and outdoor space to show case street art, which is very much a growth sector in Belfast.

A number of actions were agreed from this meeting to be taken forward. These are listed in the Action Plan in section 3 of this document, as actions 5, 6 and 7.

Meeting 3 – 02/03/2022 City East Business Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

The third meeting of the UK Regional Alliance was held on 2nd March 2022 and was again hosted by East Belfast Enterprise at City East Business Centre. The meeting had been delayed as Government restrictions had been brought in, preventing gatherings “in person” and hence some previously agreed dates to meet had to be



postponed. There was also a significant rise in COVID infections during February and these factors resulted in a number of apologies and hence a lower attendance at this meeting.

At the meeting details were shared of a forthcoming street art festival called Hit the North, which is due to take place in Belfast on the weekend of 1st May 2022. In this same weekend there is also the Festival of Fools, which will attract numerous circus and street performers to the city, to perform street theatre. It was proposed that partners from the European countries involved in the SCR project could be invited to Belfast for this weekend and an event could be organised at the festival to showcase the work of the SCR project.

Partners in the Alliance meeting also expressed a keen interest in linking with street cultural activity in the SCR partner countries and asked if links could be established with the other partner cities.

The issue of premises was highlighted again and agreement was reached to hold further meetings to discuss this aspect of the support needed for artists, performers and others involved in street culture.



The intellectual outputs created by the SCR partnership were presented to Alliance members, with some discussion about how these could be refined to create the final resources that would be valued by those interested in investigating entrepreneurship from a street culture perspective.

A number of actions were agreed from this meeting to be taken forward. These are listed in the Action Plan in section 3 of this document, as actions 8, 9 and 10.

Meeting 4

The fourth meeting of the UK Regional Alliance was held on 28th April 2022 in the University of Ulster Campus in Belfast.



The event was well attended by a number of street artists, who discussed the



needs of entrepreneurs involved in street culture and the merits of establishing a Forum to promote networking and to establish a focus for entrepreneurs involved in street culture, where the needs of this sector can be further understood and to lobby policy makers for resources to design and deliver interventions to encourage entrepreneurship in this sector.

The resources that have been developed so far by the Street Culture for Regions partners were shared and reviewed by those in attendance and further discussions were held to develop ideas for future multiplier and dissemination events, which will provide a platform for the final project resources to be promoted.

MULTIPLIER EVENT

The UK regional multiplier event was held on 14th October 2022 in The Vault Studios in Belfast. The event was held at the Vault to showcase this venue, which is a collective of entrepreneurs involved in street culture activity in Belfast, UK. The range of activity includes street performers, street artists, street food vendors, street musicians, photographers and videographers. The event attracted over 40 attendees, who heard from the project partners about the project and the intellectual outputs produced. There



were performances from street performers and a live creation of a street art mural interspersed throughout the presentations, with a panel discussion held to close the event. As well as the project partners, there were presentations from members of The Vault Studios collective and contributions from a



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lecturer from the University of Ulster on the panel discussion.



Mural Artwork created during the multiplier event

The event finished with catering provided by a street food vendor, while attendees were brought on a visit of The Vault Studios and were able to engage in a informal networking, building relationships and connections to take forward opportunities from the information presented during the event.



3.0 Action Plan

This section of the action plan provides further details of the work of the UK Regional Partnership and the actions that have been developed, a summary of which is presented in the following table:


Action	Proposed Action	Cost	Who Is Involved?	Anticipated Outcome	Status of Action
1	Develop UK Regional Alliance	£0	East Belfast Enterprise as lead partner	Collaborative partnership established to develop actions to deliver regional impact	Complete
2	Conduct Research and a mapping exercise to summarise activity relating to street culture in the region of East Belfast and the policies relevant to development of entrepreneurship in this sector.	£0	Alliance members to share information for EBE to compile a summary	Greater clarity about activity relating to street culture in the region and identification of gaps and needs to support entrepreneurship in this sector.	Complete – appended to this action plan document



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3	Engage with the local business community in the region to develop an “artists in residence” project	£0	Alliance members, including Business in the Community, led by EBE	A presence of artists embedded within business facilities, encouraging integration between business and the arts (including street artists)	Ongoing
4	Alliance members to identify and share case studies, which can be used to populate content for the resources that will be produced by the SCR partners.	£0	Alliance members, co-ordinated by EBE	To showcase examples of entrepreneurship in street culture, which can be included in the SCR project resources that will be developed as intellectual outputs from the project.	Complete – case studies identified and included in SCR project IO1.
5	Develop a forum for those interested in Street Culture to network, share ideas and create a focal point for lobbying and activating on behalf of this sector	£minimal, tbc relating to possible need for room hire and	EBE to develop this concept through further meetings of the Alliance and host initial meetings to contribute to	An informal mechanism to encourage ongoing development of the street culture scene in East Belfast	Ongoing



		catering	SCR project sustainability		
6	Establish a hub within the heart of the defined region to provide a focus on street culture activity, to include workshop studios, performance space and training within which to deliver support for entrepreneurs	£750,000	East Belfast Enterprise, The Vault Studios	An incubation space that will support start-up artisan/creative businesses and provide business training and advisory support	 <p>Potential location identified and other locations being researched. Capital funding opportunities being identified and researched.</p>
7	Promote the work of Alliance member, Bright Umbrella and assist with advertising of forthcoming film production 'My Place, Our Future'	£0	EBE and Alliance members	To encourage community engagement with this project, which will provide a voice to the community to articulate how to envision the future of	Completed and connections made with local community organisations in the East Belfast region.



				the region	
8	Promote SCR project at a fringe event at the Hit the North street art festival	c£300	East Belfast Enterprise, Seedhead Arts	To provide an opportunity to promote the work of the SCR project to street artists at a dedicated street art festival	Complete on 28 th April 2022, attended by a number of street artists, to discuss the needs of entrepreneurs involved in street culture.
9	Create connections between street festival organisers in the East Belfast region and similar festivals in the regions of SCR partners	£0	East Belfast Enterprise to engage with SCR partners	To investigate opportunities to create links between the East Belfast region and regions connected with SCR partners.	Ongoing
10	Review of Intellectual Outputs	£0	Alliance members	To critically review the intellectual outputs created by the SCR project partners, as part of the user testing process.	Complete.
11	Creation of prominent street art mural at City East building, within the East Belfast region	£to be confirmed	East Belfast Enterprise, Mural Arts Belfast	To establish City East as an iconic landmark at the gateway into East Belfast.	Funding mostly secured, local community groups recruited and design phase for mural artwork underway.



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12	Develop a street art tour and showcase this to SCR partners at the meeting planned for Belfast in June 2022	£to be confirmed	East Belfast Enterprise and Seedhead Arts	To showcase street culture and street art in the East Belfast Region to SCR partners and other visitors	Completed.
13	Plans being discussed with locally based mural artist in Belfast to develop a heritage project about the creation and evolution of murals in Belfast	£to be confirmed	East Belfast Enterprise and Belfast Mural Arts	To research and chart the history of mural street artwork in Belfast	Ongoing
14	Recruitment with Bright Umbrella Theatre Company to establish a new Board of Trustees	£0	Bright Umbrella, EBE and Alliance Members	Research and consultation underway to recruit new Board of Trustees	Ongoing



4.0 Future Sustainability

Future sustainability will be focused on the dissemination and use of the intellectual outputs that will be developed through the transnational partnership.

A dedicated website has been developed at <https://www.street-culture.eu/> This will be the main point for accessing the resources, which are free to use and will be disseminated widely, encouraging those involved in entrepreneurship and street culture to make use of the resources and ensure that the impact of the SCR programme continues to be felt long after the initial funding period.

Within this action plan there are a number of actions ongoing, which are drawing on the collaborations developed through the SCR programme to develop initiatives that will promote street culture and associated entrepreneurship opportunities and skills within the East Belfast region. A number of these initiatives include capital investment into physical infrastructure to support entrepreneurship and incubate small businesses within the region. This infrastructure will provide a lasting impact for many years and provide a platform for additional interventions to support business growth and employment in the area.

5.0 Conclusions

The Street Culture for Regions programme has been a successful intervention in the UK region. Through the regional alliance, it has brought together a wide and diverse range of actors to develop a range of initiatives aimed at improving the economic conditions and opportunities for those involved in street culture in East Belfast. The programme has developed resources to be used by educators to provide advice and training to those engaged in street culture activity, and to help to encourage a greater engagement in entrepreneurship within this target demographic.

The new relationships developed through the alliance have opened fresh opportunities for collaborative working as reflected within this action plan. East Belfast Enterprise has led this partnership and will continue to do so for as long as the members continue to benefit from this collaborative forum. This action plan continues to be a living and working document, with new actions replacing completed action as new opportunities are identified and new relationships formed via the regional alliance. This will continue to be the case and it is very much evident that the Street Culture for Region programme has succeeded as a catalyst to stimulate activity in the East Belfast region, which can be replicated through the resources that the trans-national partners have published and made available via the web portal.



Appendix 1 – Summary of Research Completed by the UK Regional Alliance

In the work of the UK Regional Alliance, secondary research has been carried out to help to identify relevant strategies and programmes and identify where there may be gaps. A summary of this research follows.

A number of key stakeholders have developed policy frameworks for the Creative Arts in Northern Ireland, which shape the landscape for Street Culture. These are highlighted below.

Arts Council NI (ACNI)

Inspire Connect Lead: Draft Strategic Framework for Developing the Arts 2019-2024

The Framework provides an overview of the strategic direction ACNI are proposing to take over the 5-year period, 2019-2024. The vision is to 'place arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life' by championing the arts, developing and investing in artistic excellence and enabling the creation of experiences that enrich people's lives.

The overriding commitment is to ensure that artists and arts organisations, working in all art forms, receive the support they need to continue to develop and work with confidence, vision and ambition. To achieve this effectively will require creativity, offering fresh solutions, and leading the sector in a strategic direction that will not only add strength and resilience, but will create opportunity and growth.

The guiding principles that will underpin and inform activity are:

Inspire – great art inspires us, nurtures our understanding of who we are and the world around us, and brings us together;

Connect – the Arts are without boundaries, connecting communities, help build creative places, define a new sense of identity, help us tell our stories, seek out and engage wider audiences; and

Lead – enabling and empowering the sector to achieve its ambitions, to speak out for the arts, working together with other stakeholders to deliver on this promise.

This Framework has been submitted to the Department of Communities (DfC) for approval but remains in draft form at this time.



ACNI Business Plan 2019-20

The business plan reflects the first years operation of the new 5-year framework, specifically developed in light of the prevailing uncertainties: the draft Programme for Government (PfG); the pressure to protect ‘frontline services’ and manage within reduced public funding; the need to encourage resilience within the sector and promote, where appropriate, the use of shared services.

Arts organisations in Northern Ireland are reliant on public funding at a time when this funding source is uncertain. ACNI will support portfolio funded organisations to diversify their income sources, build awareness of funding opportunities available through charitable trusts and foundations and invest in capacity building measures to help the sector become more financially resilient.

The draft PfG contains a commitment to work in a more outcome-focused way with an emphasis on: economic advancement, tackling disadvantage and improving citizen wellbeing. It acknowledges the potential of the arts and cultural sector as instruments for positive change.

The Department has stated that Outcome 5 – “An innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential”, should be the driving force shaping the Arts Council’s work. It also states that the economic and social impact of the arts extends much more widely into health, wellbeing, and quality of life (outcome 4); to the creation of a more equal society (Outcome 3); to having a safe community where we respect the law and each other (Outcome 7) and respect diverse cultural identities (Outcome 9); where we care for each other and help those in need (Outcome 8); and that the arts contribute powerfully to the creation of places where people want to live work, visit, and invest (outcome 10).

Amongst the commitments made in the Business Plan, ACNI will:

- Foster the principles of adaptive resilience, encourage arts organisations to collaborate with each other, to consider the possible benefits of shared services, engage with the private sector to increase sponsorship, and to assess commercial opportunities.
- Work with local authorities to ensure the Arts are integral to local Community Plans by participating in the planning processes, including the development of local integrated arts strategies. Eight out of the possible ten eligible local authorities have developed significant new arts programmes, with a total investment of £872,640 of Arts Council Lottery funds being matched by the local authorities.



- Deliver the Resilience Programme in conjunction with Belfast City Council, providing professional support and funding helping 14 of Belfast's key arts organisations with a city-wide reach to adapt and change to meet the growing needs of the city.
- Manage and monitor the Annual Funding Programme within the context of reduced public funding by ranking each organisation against its ability to address ACNI's strategic objectives.

Tourism NI

Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) is responsible for the development of tourism and the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination. Its Vision is to champion the development and promotion of the Northern Ireland experience confidently and passionately, with a mission to build the value of tourism to the local economy in partnership with government and industry.

Key strategic themes for Tourism NI include:

Unlocking potential – to raise awareness of the importance of tourism to the economy by actively building and consolidating relationships with key strategic partners to deliver mutual benefits.

Building the tourism product – funding the development of quality tourism assets that are aligned to visitor needs.

Developing a quality visitor experience – supporting the development of a high-quality tourism industry through programmes that are based on visitor needs, by investing in people, projects and events that result in increased spending by leisure and business visitors.

Promoting the destination – through effective marketing communications to NI and ROI. This will include the recently launched 'Embrace a Giant Spirit', NI's new Experience brand aimed at increasing visitor numbers and ensuring economic impact across all regions of NI.

Belfast City Council

Belfast Agenda – Belfast's Community Plan to 2035

The Belfast Agenda represents the first community plan for the city, setting a vision for 2035 that imagines a culturally vibrant city, with a new approach to partnership working. The Belfast Agenda identifies five outcomes for the city:



- Everyone in Belfast benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy;
- Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive city for all;
- Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential;
- Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing; and
- Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.

Leading on from the Belfast Agenda, and following widespread consultation across the city, a ten-year cultural strategy, A City Imagining, was developed to commence implementation from April 2020.

A City Imagining Cultural Strategy 2020–2030

The Strategy is a consolidation of the foundation, commitments and achievements of several preceding strategies and frameworks, recognising the complex cultural challenges of Belfast. A City Imagining sets out four strategic themes and 16 priorities (4 under each theme):

A City Belonging – to support cultural participation as a critical part of active participation in civic society;

A City Challenging – to create the conditions whereby Belfast’s open spaces and cultural venues offer opportunities for diverse encounters across and beyond different cultures, lifestyles and attitudes;

A City Creating – to facilitate and explore new ways of working, taking more risks and helping artists to have more autonomy to engage with citizens in new and creative ways;

A City Exploring – to facilitate, support and maintain city, regional and international networks and collaborative partnerships on a range of levels.

Recognising the need for a long-term commitment provided by a 10-year strategy, the approach will be delivered through shorter implementation phases allowing for a response to the changing local and global environments. The first implementation phase will be 2020-2023.

‘At Home’ in 2023

2023 has been designated a year of culture, launching a programme of immersive cultural activity. This will celebrate and challenge what it means to be at home in Belfast, to create a legacy of better understanding of identity, relationships with one another and the place in the world.



It is the ambition to have achieved the designation of UNESCO City of Music for Belfast by 2023, to embed a new approach to festival and events in the city, and to be well on the way towards opening a new cultural attraction in the city centre.

The artistic programme for the year will be structured around six flagship projects. Four of these projects will build on existing signature events in the city with a further two being special commissions for the year. The rationale for this is to support the long-term transformation of established cultural events as well as recognising a unique opportunity to commission new work of scale and international relevance. The programme will also include a series of further commissions ranging in content, style, scale and purpose. This could include individual artists through to international collaborations.

The aim is to develop a Belfast portfolio of festivals and events. This will consist of up to 5 signature and 12 growth events each year. It will also include continued investment in smaller festivals. Partners will work together to bid to secure a major event once every five years. The approach will also consider the potential for a series of homegrown events such as a year of culture in 2023, to deliver the same level of impact as an external international event.

Developing an Investment Programme

The purpose of this programme will be to support the delivery of strategic priorities and in turn will contribute to achieving the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda. The aims of the cultural investment model are to:

- Support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change;
- Invest in the cultural and creative sectors skills development and capacity for production and innovation;
- Position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking; and
- Establish Belfast as a cultural destination.

Investment Strands will be based around 4 priorities:

Anchor – will support the cultural infrastructure necessary for a thriving cultural ecosystem;

Activate – will empower civic and sectoral engagement, skills and capacity building in order to support inclusive growth;

Experiment – will facilitate innovation, catalyst projects and new ideas; and



Open – will support outward-facing opportunities including marketing and international co-operation.

Belfast City Council will continue to offer multi-annual grants recognising the importance of this type of funding in order to sustain accessible cultural activity and infrastructure. However, evaluation of the existing programme has revealed the need to adapt the 'one size fits all' model. A new multi-annual programme will be designed to better support the diversity of cultural organisations.

2. Identify possible gaps and needs

There are a range of gaps and needs, within our local context, which we have identified through initial engagement with stakeholders. These include:

- Lowest per capita in NI for the UK for creative industries funding and the arts
- Reliance on funding and meeting the requirements which works counter-productively to the creativity that should be the bedrock of this sector
- Frustration with existing systems from school onwards and the way the system operates/is structured/is funded, which doesn't encourage street culture and doesn't promote entrepreneurship opportunities in this sector
- Should be more natural and instinctive with an encouragement to take risks, but those in the sector have been conditioned to not think or operate this way on the whole
- Providers cling to the small amounts of money they receive and fear to change and lose this
- Disconnect between culture and entrepreneurship in NI
- Individuals that want to make a living from their creativity but the existing structures do not encourage this and are not tailored for the creative industries/arts sectors
- Opportunity to try things from a young age and decide if this is right for you
- Work of the sector needs to be better recognised and a value placed on this