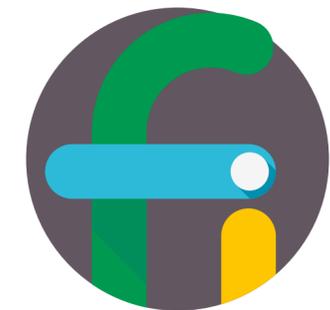


Appreciative Inquiry Report

Derry/Londonderry Urban Village Area



Future Innovators
Learn. Design. Empower.

Project Overview:

The Future Innovators Project is a PEACE IV funded project, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and delivered by Co-operation Ireland in partnership with Belfast Interface Project, Donegal Youth Service, Animorph Co-operative and the University of Essex. Future Innovators promotes community-led social innovation and social enterprise; it builds the capacity of local communities to apply innovative thinking to social problems and develop creative solutions that foster a greater sense of community cohesion, and where possible, sustain these solutions through the adoption of a social enterprise model.

Target Areas:

- Border Counties of the Republic of Ireland (Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Monaghan, Cavan, Louth)
- Northern Ireland – Urban Village Areas:
- Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan (North Belfast)
- Colin (West Belfast)
- Eastside (East Belfast)
- Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Markets areas (South Belfast)
- Bishop Street, Bogside and Fountain areas (Derry/Londonderry)

The first stage of the Future Innovators Project was to undertake an Appreciative Inquiry into each of the target areas. This took place from September 2021 ~ May 2022. The aim of this was to develop a deeper understanding of the local context in each of the areas, identify existing community structures and social innovation/enterprise initiatives, highlight the strengths within communities and unpack possible gaps or challenges this project could help address. This report will provide a summary of our findings from the Appreciative Inquiry process undertaken in the Derry/Londonderry UV Area, and demonstrate how these findings will be used to shape the delivery of the Future Innovators Project.

Main Activities



Appreciative Inquiry Model – the 5 D's

Appreciative Inquiry Framework

Future Innovators adopted this framework to structure out Appreciative Inquiry phase.



1. **Define.** Clarify the topic of inquiry. What exactly do we want to ask/ find out?



2. **Discover.** What is working well? What are the key markers of success in the community?



3. **Dream.** Based on past achievements and success, now imagine the possibilities of what could be. What are your wishes, hopes or aspirations for your community? How can we do more of what is good / what works?



4. **Design.** Refine the ideas of what could be to establish what should be. What are the priorities? What is best for everyone?



5. **Deliver.** Now with an understanding of the community values and ideals, what will it take to make this a reality?

Derry/Londonderry Urban Village Area

A significant amount of community outreach and engagement has been undertaken in the area in recent years. The map below provides a snapshot of the range of ongoing and future initiatives being brought to the area through the efforts of the local community sector and the Urban Village Initiative.

Further info can be found [here](#).

This outreach work has helped us understand the local context and engage with communities through the lens of community-led social innovation.

Appreciative Inquiry event took place on 14th March at St. Columb's Hall in the city and involved three sessions:



Dream

- 1. Dream/(Discover).** Our aim for this session was to come away with a better understanding of the local challenges and which ones should be prioritised within this project. We also asked a few questions to learn about any existing social innovation or enterprise ideas in the area, particularly those working well in the area.



Design

- 2. Design.** Our aim for this session was to workshop and refine proposed social innovation/enterprise ideas, and to present a prototype version of digital toolkit. Attendees were then invited to give feedback and help co-design the development of the digital toolkit.



Deliver

- 3. Deliver.** Our aim for this session was to better understand the community's needs, what types of support that would be of most benefit, and to begin to roadmap the way forward to make any proposed social innovation/enterprise projects a reality. We also asked questions around the planning and format of future activities so that we can try to put things in place that suit the majority, and outlined next steps of the project and how to get involved (as an organisation or an individual).

Session 1 – Dream/Discover Findings



The top 5 priority issues:

1. Communication and co-ordination.
2. Access to grants/funding.
3. Short-term funding (<1 year).
4. Silo working.
5. Staying motivated – there are often limited progression opportunities after completing training.

Other issues:

- Social isolation
- Dereliction and vacancy
- Sustainable business planning
- Tourism
- Identifying your market audience
- Access to community spaces and facilities
- Active cultural engagement
- Digital connectivity

This session allowed a discussion to unfold around topics/ challenges that could be prioritised through the Future Innovators Project. As a result we were able to test our assumptions about what the community's priorities are, and this has helped us to narrow the scope of topics/themes we will cover through the further implementation of the project.

In terms of existing initiatives that are working well, participants identified:

- Rath Mor 50+ group
- Monday Club
- Social supermarket
- Rental income
- Health for Life
- Iona Enterprises
- Tearman (counselling services)
- Weekly classes at healthy living centres
- Bogside and Brandywell Health Check / Fairs
- Creggan Country Park

Initially, participants were unsure of how social innovation or social enterprise could be applied to address local challenges.



Session 2 – Design Findings

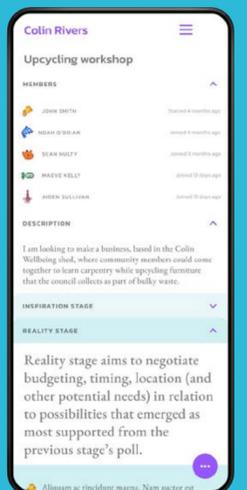
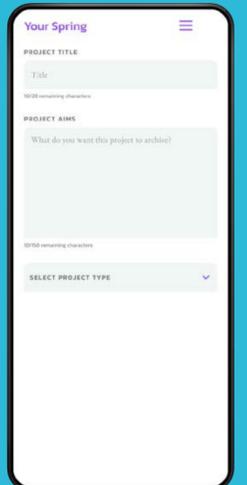
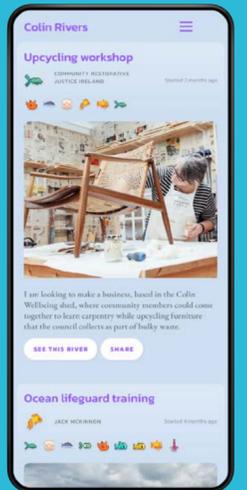
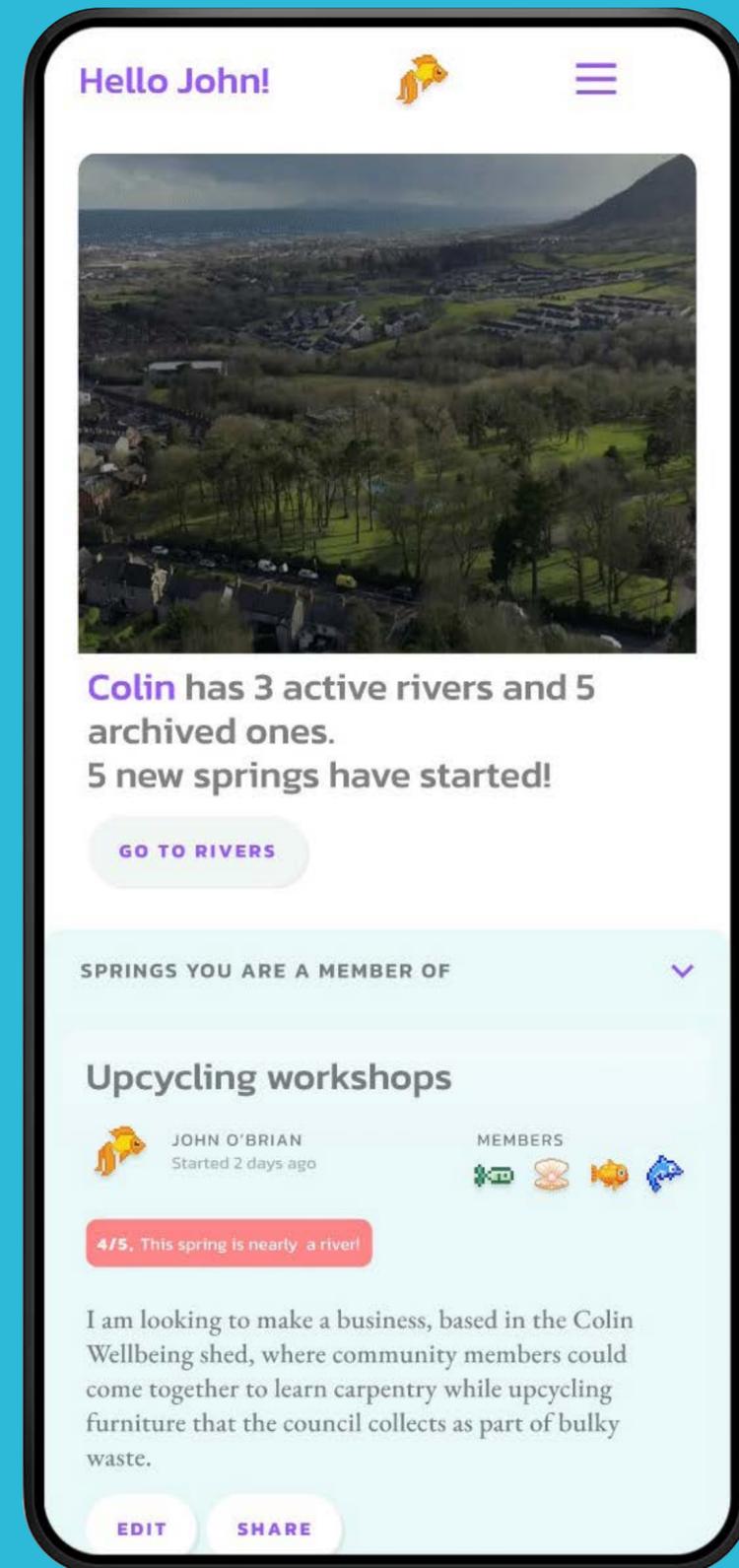
A tutorial of the digital platform/toolkit can be accessed [here](#).

Digital Toolkit

Participants were presented with a prototype version of the digital toolkit. Through exploring its various features and applications, participants helped to co-design the further development of the toolkit by assessing the specific benefits that would be most useful and relevant in this area.

Main Findings:

- Online resources should be collated and accessible in one place to reduce time spent searching through irrelevant information in multiple places.
- Digital accessibility issues were highlighted. Participants felt older people may be at a disadvantage when trying to access the toolkit due to being less confident with new technology.
- Benefits of social media platforms were highlighted as these are currently used by participants. In particular, posting was noted as an important feature to consider when developing this toolkit.
- These findings have helped us to focus the future design and development efforts on 3 main aspects: Profiles, Projects and Resources.



Session 3 – Deliver Findings

Support Needs:

Participants identified the following support needs:

- Shared hubs for collaboration.
- Training for community organisation's staff in a range of areas e.g. grant writing, identifying funding sources, and how to market community-based services to your target audience/clients.
- Break down the jargon of social innovation and social enterprise and highlight that it is about community re-investment.
- Spreading awareness of local community projects that are happening to the whole community.



Next Steps:

We then outlined the next steps of the Future Innovators project to participants:

1. Delivery of a localised Social Innovation Training & Development Programme.
2. The Innovation Team will reach out to continue the co-design of the digital toolkit.
3. Appreciative Inquiry Findings Report will be shared.



Other Appreciative Inquiry Activities

Stakeholder Engagement

Community Survey / social media campaign



Stakeholder Engagement

We also conducted a number of one-to-one meetings with a range of community and statutory stakeholders to raise awareness of the project, receive their input on how the project should be delivered in the local area and explore opportunities for collaboration.



Community Survey/ Social Media Campaign

Throughout the Appreciative Inquiry process we also used social media to engage people in the project. Through targeted advertisements on Facebook and Instagram we disseminated an online survey to give community members in the target areas an opportunity to contribute their ideas to the development of the project. We also distributed flyers in the areas to capture those who may not be on social media. In return for completing the survey, respondents were entered into a prize draw to win a £40 shopping voucher. We had 50 responses from across all Urban Village areas. 5 winners were randomly selected using unique ID's.

Find us on social media!

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<https://cooperationireland.org/projects/future-innovators/>

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