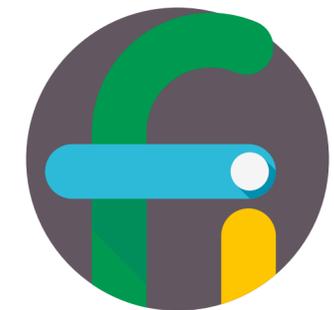


Appreciative Inquiry Report

Eastside 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 Eastside 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?

Eastside 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 13th May at the Banana Block in the Eastside UV Area, 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.

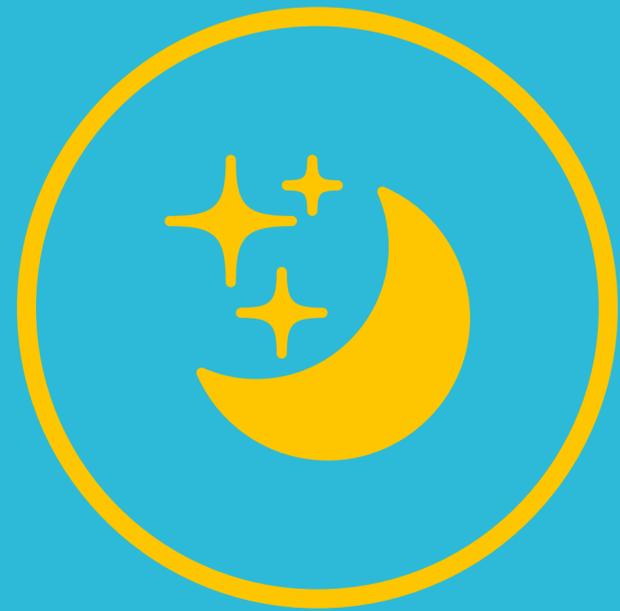


Deliver

- 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 priority issues:

1. Creative thinking and collaboration should be central to prospective social innovation projects in the area. Bringing people together from differing perspectives to develop skills and jointly create programmes that can benefit the whole community.
2. Young people should be at the centre of social innovation and creative programmes.
3. The historical and cultural heritage of East Belfast should be considered in the design of future social innovation initiatives, including education on the Irish language.

Attendees contributed to discussions around potential projects that could flow from the priority issues they identified, and drawing on their own backgrounds and experience, presented promising innovation ideas that could positively transform the communities within the Eastside UV area.

One idea was to engage young people from both communities in broken ceramic art, where they would break and put shattered pieces back together and create new pieces of art.

The second innovative idea was to encourage educational programmes to promote the cultural heritage of East Belfast regarding Irish language education. This would build on an existing scheme led by Turas, which aims to revolutionise how people relate to the Irish language and promote respect for the Irish language outside of the known areas in East Belfast.



Session 2 – Design Findings

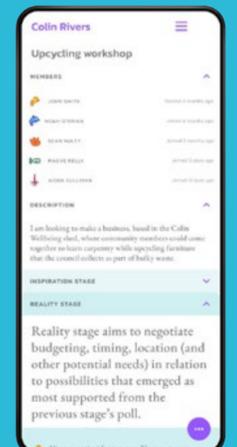
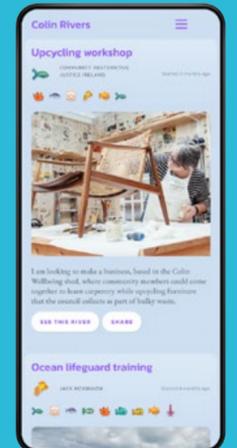
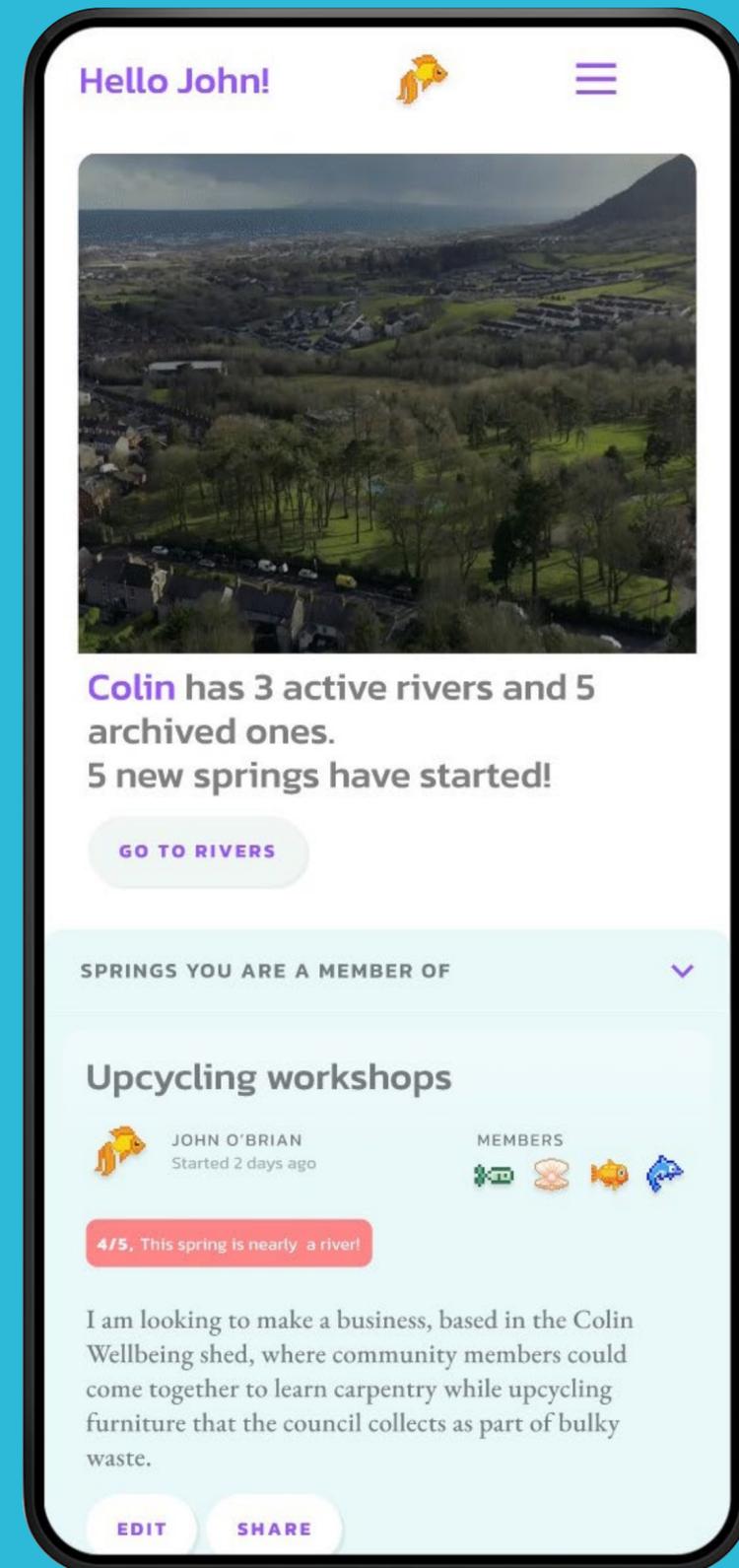
A tutorial of the digital platform/toolkit can be accessed [here](#).

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:

- Different Levels of Knowledge and Experience. A key challenge will be finding a way to bridge these differences in knowledge and experience in relation to social innovation in order to create resources and programmes that are both empowering and inclusive.
- Structural Barriers. Across all target areas of the project there is a lack of consistent funding for supporting social innovation at the community level.
- Over Consultation. Community leaders and members regularly raised the issue that they were wary of more programmes as they felt “over consulted”. Rather than more projects or training, there was a tangible desire for real resources and investment that could tangibly improve their areas.
- Lack of Co-ordination. While each of the areas had interesting projects there was a lack of awareness, knowledge sharing, and institutional networks connecting them together.



Session 3 – Deliver Findings

Support Needs:

Participants identified the following support needs:

- Assistance with undertaking risk assessments, implementing high standard health and safety procedures and organising public liability insurance.
- Community-based initiatives should partner with new social innovation projects and offer support e.g. use of facilities.
- Communication and marketing training – how to pitch your idea to customers/funders etc.
- How to access funding and finance training.
- Networking and gaining support of key stakeholders and community members is crucial.
- Broader campaign to address stigma and stereotypes regarding the Irish language in East Belfast.



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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