

Regenerative Community Tourism Case Study: HearSay Audio Arts Festival

Maximising community benefit

- Community rooted event with a high level of local involvement and volunteering
- Opportunity for locals to share their own stories, 200 local voices included in the output of the event
- Has nurtured local talent and led to an increased level of creativity and innovation
- Paid local homestay accommodation made available for 174 visitors

COMMUNITY



- Attracts a profile of low impact visitors who tend to stay longer, often several weeks
- Challenge of a lack of local tourism and events infrastructure has led to the creative use of existing resources and repurposing of unused spaces
- Reduced emissions through use of car-pooling and public transport

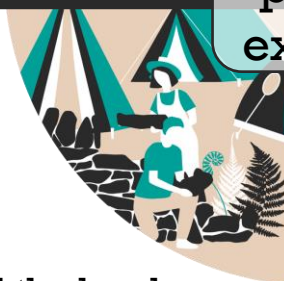
NATURE



Best
practice
examples

PLACE

- Economic impact of visitors spread around the local businesses and community
- Access for local people to engage in the arts
- Enhanced confidence and pride among local people in their area
- Has led to the emergence of several other community led cultural and creative activities and events



VISITOR

- Organic growth and evolution of the event
- Hugely participative and immersive event
- High level of interaction with the community
- High level of repeat visits to the event and the area
- Extensive opportunities for networking and collaboration with others in the sound industry





Regenerative Community Tourism Case Study: HearSay Audio Arts Festival, Co. Limerick, Ireland

Kilfinane, the location for HearSay, is a small town in rural County Limerick. It is not an established tourism or events destination, nevertheless, since 2014 it has become home to the largest, most unique celebration of creative audio in the world. HearSay is a dedicated festival attracting hundreds of audio makers from many disciplines to come together to inspire, create and share their work. With support from national and local government agencies, by 2019 the festival had grown to feature 111 different artists from 32 different countries.

The limited local tourism infrastructure led to a need for creativity and a reimagining of existing spaces to facilitate the festival. The local community responded to the challenge by opening up their homes, shops, pubs and churches to facilitate 129 events over 4 days in the most unusual and quirky locations imaginable such as living rooms, churches and hairdressing salons. The provision of local homestay accommodation for 174 visitors has not only addressed the infrastructure deficit, but spread the economic benefits throughout the community and further contributed to social inclusion.

Locals themselves have not only volunteered but have also become 'stars', with 200 local voices included in the recordings created at Hearsay. Audio workshops have also been provided for local school groups thus widening the festival's impact. Pride and confidence in the local area has been an important legacy to date and this festival has led to a resurgence of the arts in the area and a knock-on increase in arts and cultural activities and events.

www.hearsayfestival.ie



This 2023 project, funded by the Royal Irish Academy and carried out by Munster Technological University and the University of the Highlands and Islands, aimed to explore a regenerative tourism approach to rural community development in Scotland and Ireland. For more details contact Sophie.price@mtu.ie