

Policy on Arts and Creative Engagement



**Irish
Hospice
Foundation**

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



Introduction

With support from Creative Ireland IHF engaged consultant Maureen Gilbert to draft a policy on Arts and Creative Engagement. This is a summary of the document. With the same fund, IHF has employed Dominic Campbell as Arts and Creative Engagement officer to enact the policy

Background

IHF understands that the arts and creative expression, broadly defined and in all their manifestations can help people to approach the issues of dying, death, grief, and loss in a healthy way that can deepen people's engagement with these issues beyond the conventions of cultural norms.

IHF developed this policy to guide their engagement with the arts and cultural sector and to provide parameters and guidance for the organisation's work in the field. It was developed through consultation with 50 plus organisations, asking:

How best can IHF engage with the arts so as to encourage more open and a deeper conversation about dying, death, grief, and loss among the general public in Ireland?

General advice from interviewees

1. Bring IHF expertise to the arts and build relationships of mutual benefit with the sector.
2. Engage the broadest range of people. Make links.
3. Achieve optimum balance between events for audience and events for participation, and between online and face-to-face events.
4. Understand the arts in IHF. Arrange staff workshops to encourage an "experiential understanding" of how the arts works and to gain an "understanding of the power of creative engagement" in their work.
5. Support arts-related activity in IHF, interviewees offered wide-ranging advice on this topic, including ideas for steering committees, advisory groups, brains trusts, and mentors.

Recommendations

Scope

This policy applies to IHF's engagement with the general public.

The organisation does not propose to develop specialised arts, cultural or creative expression activities for people nearing end of life, nor does it aim to engage in arts-related work whose primary aim is therapeutic.

Collaboration

- IHF intends to work collaboratively with appropriate, experienced organisations and practitioners with a track record in the field of the arts, culture, and creative expression which share its values and harmonises with its aims.
- IHF aims to build on existing arts practice through targeted strategic partnerships.
- We will use a “partnership of expertise” approach to ensure that its collaborations in the area of arts, culture, and creative expression are of mutual benefit.
- IHF is not now, nor does it intend to become an arts or “creative sector” organisation. It does intend to build on a rights based approach.

Artistic integrity

- IHF respects the integrity of the arts and creative sector, and the intrinsic value of quality arts and creative products.
- The People's Charter on Dying, Death, and Bereavement underpins all IHF activities in the area which have the aim of broadening and deepening conversations in Ireland about dying, death, grief, and loss.
- IHF understands artistic development and public engagement to be of equal value.
- It is not the organisation's intention to instrumentalise the arts, culture, or creative engagement for its own gain.

Funding

- While IHF's fundraising activities may from time to time include arts products and approaches, the aim of IHF's arts policy is to guide IHF's engagement with the arts and cultural sector in order to broaden and deepen the conversation in Ireland about dying, death, grief, and loss.
- While IHF may from time to time offer small grants for the purposes of seeding activities, developing work, or other goals, the organisation is not aiming to become a major funder of the arts.

General Advice & Feedback

Quotes from Interviewees

- Lots of things that might seem complicated or difficult to IHF are easy and natural [for us], so don't worry!
- It is IHF's calm familiarity with dying, death, grief, and loss that the arts and creative sectors will appreciate.
- Meaningful arts-based work takes time to develop. Be brave: "utter the unutterable –reclaim", "be profound, not just a veneer".
- "Make it real": don't make IHF arts activities too "nice", "provocative art simulates conversation"
- Too much nostalgia makes art maudlin; "too much protection cheats people of possibilities and experience".
- Be distinctive while avoiding gimmickry. "the conversation may emerge from the failure". Don't expect to get it right first time.
- IHF arts officer's job is to build for the future by linking two different worlds not to do a few quick projects before summer 2021.
- Make sure that events are affordable – "it compounds grief if people want to attend but cannot".
- Consider conducting research: "This is an area where more research and evidence is needed and IHF's work would greatly contribute to the evidence base".
- "Build networks...sustained engagement with agencies and through other organisations... communities of practice"; "send a signal of interest in partnering –start with resource organisations as they have a developmental remit and many are used to being involved at a speculative level".
- The Arts Council is promoting its Equality, Human Rights, and Diversity policy vigorously with arts organisations and practitioners. Encourage them to see "a good death" (based on the Charter) as a human right.
- Use the Charter as a stimulus for art's organisations. "[In participatory workshops] the making may well be less important than the conversation—the medium is a catalyst only."
- Bring arts into existing IHF activities (e.g. Forum on the End of Life, Death Cafés).
- Do some thinking NOW about the national COVID-19 commemoration so that you have something to offer when the Government comes calling. "You are aiming for deep cultural change"
- "Start with small jewel's and take a long perspective".



**Irish
Hospice
Foundation**

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



For queries, please contact:

Dominic Campbell, Arts & Cultural Engagement Officer
dominic.campbell@hospicefoundation.ie

Irish Hospice Foundation
Morrison Chambers,
32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2
D02 YE06

hospicefoundation.ie | info@hospicefoundation.ie

Registered Charity 20013554