



Training takes place outdoors ...



IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Creative use of digital media: developing the skills of young people

Working with young people in an innovative way, the project shows how two different communities can work together to better understand their regional and personal identities

Introduction

Two Leader+ LAGs, KELT (County Kildare, Ireland) and Teignbridge Rural Regeneration Partnership (TRRP) (Devon, United Kingdom) have joined forces in a transnational project involving young people working together to achieve common goals. The project gives the participants a chance to develop digital media and life-learning skills, and allows them to explore their creativity and their feeling of regional identity. Two other local partners, the Centre for Performing Arts (Ireland) and Blind Ditch Performance (United Kingdom), are also involved.

Coming together

'The creation of the project has its origins in a fortunate meeting of like-minded people,' says Justin Larkin, LAG coordinator. This meeting had three crucial elements. Firstly, and most importantly, the two LAGs were motivated to

work with young people in a new and innovative way, and where the work was determined by the young people themselves. Secondly, both LAGs had already undertaken similar projects within their own areas and, thirdly, both LAGs wanted to develop a transnational project around this work.

In April 2004, representatives from KELT and TRRP met at a Leader+ workshop in Scotland. Over the next few months, different possibilities were explored and by November 2004 they were in a position to proceed. A series of meetings during January and February 2005 led to agreement on the final proposal by March 2005.

Project description and objectives

The project has a number of interesting aspects. At its core is a training initiative for young people aged 14 to 21, which will enable those taking part to express themselves



... and further guidance is given indoors too

in a creative way through a series of short films/DVDs. As a result, these young people can develop both specific technical abilities as well as more general communication skills, in order to inform the wider community of their views about where they live.

In terms of the film production, there are two core themes: the participants' 'perception and reality' of living in each other's home region and 'a day in the life' of this region. The resulting film will be presented to the wider public in three different way:

- public screenings of the film/DVD;
- a tour of the film/DVD showing at local centres, by Vanland⁽¹⁾;
- DVDs distributed to schools and the wider community.

Together with the films that have been produced on these themes, participants will also film and edit a documentary about the making of the transnational project.

A key part of the project is the exchange of methodologies and experience between the LAG areas. This includes exchanges related to personnel training and experiences and the ideas and opinions of the young people, using live links and DVD/film footage. In this way, young people can explore the choices they have, and are able to compare the perceptions and realities of their own daily lives. The training and the resulting films and DVDs were funded by Leader+.

⁽¹⁾ Vanland is an Action 1 project funded by Leader+. It comprises a touring caravan which has been converted into a multi-screen exhibition space (www.vanland.org).

Project outcomes

Alongside developing technical skills in a medium that is innovative, accessible and relevant to them, the project enables young people to express themselves in a creative and professional way. This is achieved through workshops with professionals who help with presentational and digital media skills. Furthermore, by ensuring that the young people themselves have full control over the work they undertake, individual skills are also developed. Teamwork helps with such aspects as dealing with responsibility, leadership roles, building confidence, and respecting and considering alternative views and opinions. These are all integral and important elements of the project. After the filming has been completed, the young people become responsible for showing the completed work.

From a community point of view, the work seeks to portray the character and diversity of local areas. Phil Aubrey (TRRP) notes, 'We did not seek to have the young people work in isolation of their community. We have tried to stimulate and encourage positive interaction.'

This wider community involvement is evident in some unexpected project developments. For example, in Ballitore, County

Kildare, a week-long programme of activity gave a boost to the whole area. Here, the community asked to see the completed footage of the film, which resulted in a première evening. Consequently, in order to host this, an old cinema in Ballitore which had been closed for 40 years was refurbished over a six-week period by the community, from their own resources. In addition, due to the high demand to see the première, live video links were installed in local pubs.

In Devon, as part of the community night in Christow, Blind Ditch Performance showed old film footage, recording life in the region from the 1940s to the 1960s. People were then invited to an interview booth where they could record their own memories and reactions to the archival film. This was managed by the young people who also carried out and filmed the interviews; more than two hours of interviews were recorded. This material is to be presented to South West Regional Film Archive to keep for future generations.

The cooperation experience

While both LAGs had previous experience with this type of project, the approaches and methodologies used were quite different. By combining techniques, significant added value could be brought to the project.

Flexibility in the work programme and in the scheduling of the different activities meant that the two partners could deliver different aspects of the project independently, while at the same time contributing to each other's ac-



Results of the filming are closely monitored



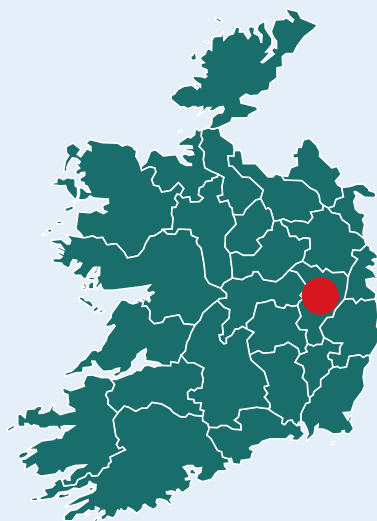
tivities. There were also some specific actions where the partners worked together to deliver project activities, such as a week-long programme of workshops, and filming on location in each of the Leader+ areas. A third element of joint activity is planned around the public launches and presentation of the finished film/DVD.

Successful innovation

Probably the most critical and innovative aspect of this project is that it is run by the young people themselves. The LAGs provide the training and technical support which allows them to take on this responsibility, so that they can decide on the issues to be explored, the story lines to be developed, the way the story is presented (TV magazine-style broadcast or a short play/drama), the method of filming, how to manage the production, and the final editing.

Conclusion

Even before the project finished, a number of elements of good practice were already evident, with both the young people and the wider communities in both LAG areas benefiting from the project. Reflecting on the work to date, Justin Larkin, LAG manager, says 'In a project of this nature, we had to be flexible and to be able to respond to circumstances as they arose. We think it was essential to allow the project to develop organically. The fact that we built this into our process certainly resulted in a stronger project.'



Creative use of digital media

Member State: Ireland
Region: Border Midland and Western
Name of the leading LAG: Kildare European Leader Teoranta (KELT)

Member State: United Kingdom
Region: South-West England
Name of the LAG: Teignbridge Rural Regeneration Partnership (TRRP)

Total population: 164 000
Surface area: 1 700 km²
Project total cost: EUR 137 094
EU: EUR 78 257
Other public funds: EUR 58 837
Period of project eligibility: May 2005 to May 2006

Project costs for Ireland
Project total cost: EUR 95 117
EU: EUR 61 827
Other public funds: EUR 33 290

Project costs for the United Kingdom
Project total cost: EUR 41 977
EU: EUR 16 430
Other public funds: EUR 25 547

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Photos provided by the Irish national network unit