

Painting by Arts for All participant Jim Tynan

# **Arts for All**

# **Annual Report**

# **2014-5**

## Chair's Report

It has been just over a year since the last AGM (December 2014) and there have been some major developments at Arts for All during this time.

Michelle Millar who has been a committee member for the past 14 years stepped down from her role as Chair in October 2014. Since then I have been meeting the challenges of the post as interim Chair.

Funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Arts for All carried out a strategic planning process. A thorough review of all the organisation's activities and programmes took place; this process involved collating the views of focus groups, carrying out individual telephone interviews and the evaluation of questionnaires.

Strong themes have emerged from this process which will help guide the work of the organisation over the next five years. We wish to build upon the good work achieved by Arts for All to date, help develop it further to meet the needs of all stakeholders – this determination to provide an excellent service to all will take place against a backdrop of significant public service spending cuts.

Public services in the region will be badly hit by the proposed funding cuts and the Arts are no exception to this. It has long been recognised that the Arts bring wide ranging benefits to the community – to health, education, civic society and peace building and currently cost the public purse well under 1% of the total allocated budget. It is likely that the Arts budget will be cut by over 11% in the 2015-2016 spending round. Arts for All is one of over 130 groups which may be adversely affected by this cut.

Despite the current funding uncertainty, Arts for All is in a prime position to help deliver many of the main objectives for the Arts Council and the Department of Culture and Arts and Leisure (DCAL). At the heart of every Arts for All activity is the desire to promote equality, tackle poverty and social exclusion – these objectives are the overarching priorities of the Northern Ireland Executive and DCAL. This should place Arts for All in a strong position as a suitable conduit for the fulfillment of these worthwhile objectives.

I would like to thank the previous Chair for her strong commitment to the organisation over a long period of time, Michelle took every opportunity to promote Arts for All, helping it grow and develop into the vibrant organisation that we have today. Sincere thanks the Board for their contribution in directing the work of the organisation over the past year, it is greatly valued. Thanks are due to the staff, Heather Floyd and Jill McDermott for facilitating diverse and imaginative programmes, their drive and determination to deliver quality programmes has been complemented by a team of volunteers /interns:

- Lucy Kelly Desmond: The port and docks of Belfast: imagined through textiles
- Vicki Maguire: marketing and research
- Nikki Turner: marketing, research and programming
- Ephy McConnell: photography
- Alison Clarke: workshop assistant
- Amy Devlin: workshop assistant

- Orlagh McGeown: workshop assistant

Chair - Valerie O'Brien

## Co-ordinator's Report

The past year has been a busy and productive one for Arts for All. The organisation continues to provide a crucial creative service for individuals.

Below is a summary of the projects which Arts for All delivered during 2014.

### Creative hub

Arts for All has ownership of three floors of the premises at 23 York Road. The first floor provides a gallery which hosted nine exhibitions in 2014 promoting the work of 126 local artists from a wide range of backgrounds – from school children to people aged over 90. It is also office space for Arts for All staff. The gallery is named after and celebrates the life of a local artist John Luke – the **John Luke Gallery**. Luke grew up in the streets around Arts for All. This sends a strong message to local residents that people from areas like the York Road can become internationally recognised artists.

The first floor houses one room for mentees and two rooms which provide much needed artistic space for three artists.

The second floor houses artist Jim Russell who has been using Arts for All as his studio since 2010. He uses it as a base from which he develops and delivers a wide range of community based projects.

The building is steadily turning into a recognised arts space within the York Road area. During 2014 it hosted 655 participants and 26 groups. The gallery was used for a wide variety of purposes including a theatre performance, dance workshops, mentoring sessions and sewing workshops. Volunteer Nikki Turner has been delivering a wide range of arts workshops on Saturdays, bringing new groups of users into the Hub. It is hoped this will continue to grow during 2015, with plans afoot for a new cultural grouping to meet and use the space for creative intercultural dialogue.



Vidhya Ranganthan and Lisa Magee at the launch of Imprint

## Capacity building arts programme

This programme is designed to build the capacity of north Belfast groups through arts activities. It offers community groups arts workshops designed around the need of the groups and participants. It is group and participant centred.

Arts for All engaged with 842 participants and 23 artists on the capacity building arts programme during 2014. Programmes were varied and interesting. The programme worked with many different art forms including: junk art, digital photography, dance, street art, Polish paper craft, arts and crafts, photography, jewellery making, writing, visual arts, drumming, textiles, mixed media, drawing, fine art and spray art.

Arts for All delivered the capacity building arts programme with 17 community groups across north Belfast working with groups in the following categories:

- Early years
- Youth
- Women
- Men
- Older people
- Intercultural



Saturday dance workshop in Arts for All

## Mentoring scheme

The mentoring scheme continues to go from strength to strength and is rapidly becoming a flagship programme for north Belfast and further afield. The scheme has been strengthened with training for mentors and mentees and an induction session.

During 2014, there were two deliveries of the programme:

- September 2013-June 2014: 11 mentees and seven mentors
- August 2014-May 2015: 16 mentees and ten mentors

The scheme was evaluated during 2014. Former mentees were tracked, looking at the baseline of what they were doing creatively when they started the scheme and how they have used the scheme. Results were very strong with all former mentees continuing to work in the creative field and produce strong artistic work. Comments from former mentees included:

'I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to take part in this mentoring scheme, I owe my happiness and my state of mind to it – all my family and friends have noticed the change in me. The change in my life is unreal – now I have a purpose and I'm earning a living from facilitating'.

'I've done photography for a couple of weddings – people seemed delighted with what I did and I was chuffed. I was very nervous beforehand though. I'm still unemployed but at least I feel I have something to work towards.'



Untitled#01 from series Ordinances and Angels by Arts for All mentor Ruth Moore

## **The port and docks of Belfast: imagined through textiles**

Arts for All delivered the second year of its intercultural textiles project – the port and docks of Belfast: imagined through textiles throughout 2014. This programme attracted 18 participants over the year from a range of backgrounds including Colombian, Indian, French, Mexican and Chinese. These participants worked alongside local women. The partner during 2014 was the Great Tapestry of Scotland and nine participants attended an informative study visit to Scotland to visit this tapestry as part of Edinburgh Festival in August 2014. During the year, participants developed two panels depicting the years 1850-1914 and 1915-1950. This covered major historical events such as two world wars, the suffragettes and major social changes such as the introduction of the NHS and the changing role of women within society during this period. Two artists were employed to deliver this project.



Participants visit the Great Tapestry of Scotland in August 2014

## Imprint

Arts for All delivered a print project during 2014 with Belfast Print Workshops. This involved a three way partnership between Belfast Print Workshops, Arts for All and ArtsEkta. Workshops were delivered in both Arts for All and ArtsEkta. Arts for All hosted six intercultural participants. Participants developed prints which reflected cultural identities. These were exhibited in the **John Luke Gallery** and Belfast Print Workshops. Several participants progressed to further training courses. The project worked with two artists.



Image developed by Fionnuala Duffin during Imprint workshops

## Holy Cross Girls' School mural

Working with North Belfast Partnership Board, Arts for All developed a mural in the school playground. This project was delivered by artist Marian Noone who worked with 20 parents to transform a wall at the back of the school. The school was so happy with the results that that they employed Marian to develop a further stretch of wall.

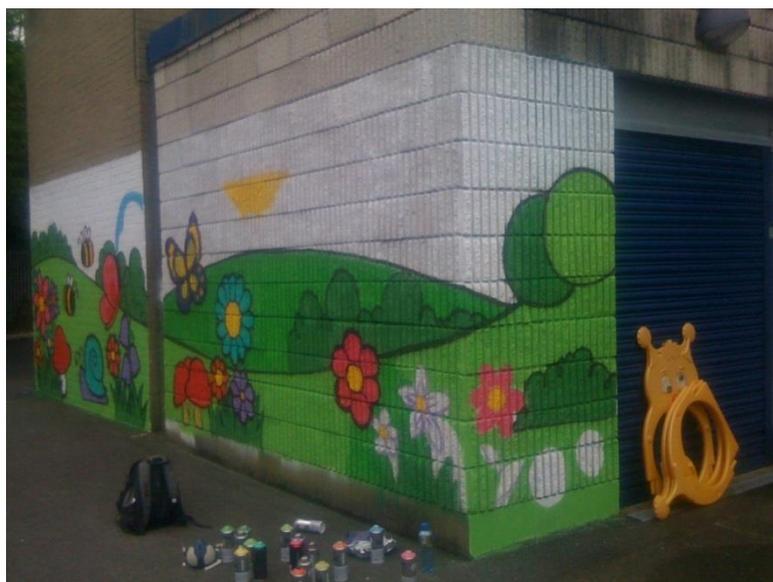


Image of the wall developed by Marian Noone and Holy Cross Girl's School parents

## World War One project

Arts for All worked with 20 participants from Tiger's Bay Historical Society and Duncairn Young Ambassador's Group to deliver a major World War One project which involved:

- History sessions
- Study visits
- Drawing sessions
- Design sessions
- Development of mural
- Completion of mural and preparation for launch

A mural was developed by artist Jonny McKerr and attracted much local attention as it was being developed. People from the community and further afield came and watched as the mural was being painted. Local historian Philip Orr has been promoting the mural as a model of good practice, particularly within the loyalist community.



Image of mural depicting scenes of World War One

## Community theatre project

Arts for All delivered a major community theatre project during 2014. This involved carrying out community research interviews with nine participants who were older north Belfast residents. Interviews were facilitated by historian Philip Orr.

Several themes evolved from the research including

- Deprivation
- Protestant and catholic
- Men's lives, boy's lives
- Women's lives, girl's lives
- The Blitz, the war and Belfast
- Morals, religions and values
- Time, change and loss

A common theme was stories of Sunday School and the role Sunday School played in working class Protestant communities. Philip developed a paper outlining the theme and a script which focused on Sunday School.

Arts for All then worked with 11 participants in the Shankill Road based Heel n Ankle community theatre to develop and perform the script. Two performances took place, one in the **John Luke Gallery** and one in the Spectrum Centre to audiences of 80.



Performance of The Wee Mission in the Spectrum Centre

## **Artists' training programme**

Arts for All delivered a quality training programme during 2014 with partners ArtsEkta which incorporated good relations, facilitation, intercultural and reflective practice training for artists and cultural workers. This training was developed with experts from the university and good relations sectors.

The programme promoted and encouraged good practice among practitioners and arts organisations when delivering good relations projects which use the arts. It developed a pool of artists and practitioners available to deliver innovative and impactful good relations workshops using arts a tool. During 2014, 7 artist/facilitators and 56 participants attended:

- Facilitation skills (two sessions, one for beginners and one intermediate)
- Equality and human rights and how they impact on artists
- Legacy of the conflict and the impact of this legacy for artists working in communities

Arts for All and ArtsEkta hope to build on this by delivering two follow on sessions, in response to participant feedback and a networking session for artists.

## **Advocacy**

An Arts for All team met Carál Ní Chiuilín the Minister for Culture and the Arts at Stormont in November 2014 to raise the profile of the organisation at government level and explore mutual areas of interest – in particular delivering arts activities in areas of disadvantage.

Arts for All submitted responses to two consultations:

- The enquiry by the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure into Inclusion in the Arts of Working Class Communities
- Consultation on the draft budget 2015-16 by the Northern Ireland Executive

Both these reports are available on the organisation's web site. Arts for All was also part of a consortium which developed a response to the consultation on the Race Equality Strategy.

## **Publicity and promotion**

This has been a productive year for Arts for All in terms of publicity, promotion and social media.

Volunteer Nikki Turner developed a new logo for the organisation.



Volunteer Vicki Maguire developed a twitter account for the organisation: @Arts4AllBelfast. She also developed a new promotional leaflet.

Arts for All developed a new web site which staff were trained to update and updates are now made on a regular basis.

The Facebook page has 220 likes and a special Facebook page for the mentoring scheme has also been developed which has 50 likes.

Arts for All volunteers Vicki and Nikki have also developed a questionnaire for dissemination with north Belfast residents to assess their needs in relation to Arts for All.

Good morning Ulster did an interview with the Arts for All co-ordinator at the end of 2014 highlighting and raising the profile of the organisations work.

## **Looking forward to 2015**

Arts for All is looking forward to 2015. The organisation is hopeful that there will be a positive outcome to the application to the Social Investment Fund to purchase and refurbish the building.

Staff and volunteers are planning an open day in February 2015 to attract local residents into the Hub.

Arts for All has received funding from Re-imagining Communities to carry out a consultation on developing a piece of art work for a wall on the York Road. Arts for All will be delivering this project with the Dean Clarke Foundation, Star Neighbourhood Centre and Fortwilliam and McRory.

Arts for All has received funding from the Community Relations Council to develop an exciting exchange with An Chultúrlann in west Belfast. This will involve working with two men's sheds in north and west Belfast exploring the lives of two internationally renowned international artists John Luke (north Belfast) and Gerard Dillon (west Belfast).



Lord Mayor Nichola Mallon launches Midland Arts Centre exhibition in December 2015