

Pilot programme:
**Urban Villages tourism research
and content development**



Northern Ireland
Executive

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Changing for the better, together



Background

Several tourism related projects in the EastSide Urban Village area are working together to maximise local approaches to tourism. These projects include:

- greeter scheme sharing authentic community voices and insight
- use of digital technologies
- cross community partnership to promote ‘peace tourism’

Additional support for research and content development

Staff and volunteers from the EastSide projects are also taking part in a 10 week pilot development programme coordinated by National Museums NI. This will share learning and expertise on enhancing tourism activities and related product development.



National Museums NI are the region’s premier cultural, learning and tourist destinations. Its three museums tell the story of human settlement in Ireland. The organisation is a public body accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Department for Communities.

The Ulster Museum is among the most popular local tourist destinations. Over 460,000 visitors enjoyed the museum in 2016. It houses a vast array of art, historical artefacts and specimens from the natural world.

The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum is a museum of two distinct parts. The first is an experience of life over 100 years ago. The second, one of the most comprehensive transport collections in Europe.

The Ulster American Folk Park explores the human drama behind emigration from Ulster to the new world homesteads of the American frontier.

Session 1: Key principles to remembering the past

Date: 28th November 2017
Location: Ulster Museum, Belfast

Introduction to the ethical principles of remembering as developed by the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This session will include a visit to the Modern History Gallery to explore a project which had these principles at its core. The session will support community led projects in utilising inclusive approaches and case study toolkits endorsed by CRC/HLF. It will also include an overview of Peace Tourism guidelines developed by Ulster University. Organisations will understand the core ethical considerations and principles to devising inclusive approaches to remembering the past and will be able to apply these approaches to their own projects.

Session 2: Approaches to storytelling, exhibition design & interpretation

Date: 5th December 2017
Location: Ulster Museum, Belfast

Introduction to the development of storylines; the role of research and the use of collections and heritage sites. This practical session will examine approaches which provide meaning for multiple audiences with different learning needs, styles and abilities. It will provide examples of interpretation techniques which connect the widest possible audience with culture and heritage. Organisations will consider the use of information in a manner meeting the needs of their audiences; and form an understanding of the rigour needed when conveying information to people interested in their communities and stories.

Session 3: Collections care and storage

Date: 12th December 2017
Location: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra

This session will highlight the need to effectively care for and protect collections which may be used by local communities to tell their stories. It will cover the basics of collections care and provide a behind the scenes look at how objects are cleaned and conserved. Participants will also be given a tour of the museum stores. Organisations will understand the need to carefully manage artefacts and gain an understanding of the risk to collections that can occur and the need to balance public use with conservation requirements.

Session 4: Meeting the needs of visitors

Date: 19th December 2017

Location: Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh

This session will provide an understanding of what visitors want from a heritage/cultural visit. It will cover issues such as developing a high quality visitor experience; ensuring the safety and security of people who come to visit; and providing high quality access to collections, artefacts or material heritage in a manner which best showcases and protects that resource. Organisations will be aware of the requirements of their potential audiences and will become familiar with the skills needed to be a knowledgeable advocate of their local community and its heritage.

Sessions 5 and 6: Assessing resources to support cultural activity and heritage development

Date: 16th and 23rd January 2018

Location: TBC

Facilitated access to a network of organisations and resources to further enhance research and content development. Many people at local level are not aware of the myriad resources that exist through Arm's Length Bodies of Government and other organisations which can be made available to them as they develop local projects and build community capacity. These sessions will involve a series of talks and tours which can include the organisations such as the Public Record Office (PRONI); Linen Hall Library; NI Screen; Libraries NI heritage services and newspapers archives; NI Museums Council; Belfast Exposed. Participants will attend specific sessions depending on their particular relevance.

Sessions 7 and 8: World Host Training

Date: 30th January and 6th February 2018
Location: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra

Customer service matters and positive visitor experiences are a key element to the sustainability of tourism projects. World Host training is the gold standard for customer service throughout the UK and further afield. As an accredited museum, NMNI can offer World Host training and an industry recognised qualification to delegates from UV projects. This will be particularly useful as community organisations progress projects or perhaps seek to secure support over the longer term from other funding bodies. This training is wide ranging and includes modules such as developing the skills to become an ambassador for your local area; first and last impressions; celebrating and working with differences; and developing high quality visitor engagement.

Sessions 9 and 10: Tailored guidance and next steps support

Date: 13th and 20th February 2018
Location: TBC

National Museums NI will provide tailored support and advice for each of the projects to support their longer term planning. Information and guidance will be provided to enable them to shape their tourism products and form further advantageous relationships/collaborations. Projects will be able to identify the key issues they face and formulate approaches to move their projects successfully forward.