

Culture on Prescription Europe

1. Introduction

The Culture on Prescription project is the collaborative effort of multiple organisations from Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and Romania, which aims to identify current best practices in social prescribing and develop solutions combining culture and health promotion to address loneliness and isolation in older people and those with mental health concerns.

This report offers an insight into social prescribing in Ireland through the lens of the Culture on Prescription Europe project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. This report was prepared in conjunction with a compendium that offers a European perspective of social and cultural prescription and best practice.

The Culture on Prescription project wants to promote their active involvement in cultural activities, strengthen their social interaction by connecting with the local community, and help to provide older people with the feeling of being more resilient in the challenges of their daily lives. By implementing the project, we aim to:

- Spread knowledge on a promising, evidence-based approach to addressing loneliness, isolation and mental health challenges through facts, figures and examples of good practice and provide models that can be easily adapted in parts of Europe, where practical experiences with Social Prescribing schemes are limited or non-existent.
- Create new concepts for "Culture on Prescription" offerings combining positive impacts on health through cultural activities and learning efforts.
- Provide resources and practical support to facilitators in social and healthcare provision in running non-clinical offerings for persons concerned by or at risk of loneliness or social exclusion.
- Elaborate guidelines for decision-makers in municipalities and associations on how

to adopt the approach of Social and Cultural Prescribing in their specific local and organisational setting.

- Create an implementation framework.

We want to become an example of best practices at a European and international level. We plan to develop solutions that are inclusive, sustainable, and scalable. The consortium members will present the 'Culture on Prescription' offerings, the underlying methodology and project outcomes regarding accompanying material and feedback from learners and other stakeholders in social and healthcare provision. We also want to strengthen our local, regional, national, and European networks, broaden our portfolios with new and attractive offers to our primary audiences from the social and healthcare sectors, support staff and volunteers training and provide the opportunity for cross-border knowledge.

Culture Course – Building Stories

As part of the Culture on Prescription Europe Erasmus+ project, DCU Artist in Residence Susan Leen developed a cultural course to be offered as a social prescription in coordination with local Health Service Executive (HSE) supported social prescribing link workers.

2. The Facilitator Susan Leen

Susan Leen is an award-winning visual artist whose work reflects the built environment through drawing, installations, and interventions in the public space and was identified as a facilitator of the DCU cultural offering. Susan has exhibited work across Ireland, France, the UK, Italy, Brazil, and Senegal. Susan's work can be viewed here: <https://susanleen.com/>. She has engaged in projects working with migrant communities, projects for drug and alcohol users availing of the use of controlled environments, projects for those in direct provision, as well as informal integration projects. Her experience has supported her flexible approach, understanding and identification of when to tailor projects for specific groups and how to adapt to suit the audience:

'There is a need to be flexible and to adapt to the individual's needs'. The audiences' circumstances must be taken into consideration 'going somewhere once a week can be very beneficial, but I have worked with some people who were very isolated and have very little money so this was not an option' said Susan.

Susan identified engaging with arts and culture as 'a way to switch off'. When engaging with groups, 'connections are made' that can support confidence and engagement. As a professional, Susan's approach is methodical and strategic in delivering offerings to the public. She examines the profile of her audience, assessing age, their needs, themes of interest, goals, and aspirations'. She finds using a theme 'good to work off as it can narrow

the focus and scope of the offering and support the choice of techniques used. Susan always provides examples, outlines expectations, and offers a clear structure to support inclusion and understanding. *' I make it clear what the facilitator's role is to support building trust as that is important'*. Typically, Susan will aim to have an exhibition at the end of the course *"people have a sense of pride upon completion"*. From a practical point of view, she ensures all required resources are available from space to materials. While her experiences have been predominantly positive, Susan has experienced challenges in projects/classes *'groups often stick together, this can impact integration and inhibit collaboration'*.

To combat this, Susan recommends ice breakers and informal conversations to encourage mixing in a group, she also recommends effectively using the space available for the same purpose. The selection of space/multiple spaces can offer the opportunity to 'encourage engagement, build a rapport, build trust, allow space to show the work, allow space to support people and meet their needs'. *'There is a great sense of community in Ireland, and COVID encouraged this'*. Barriers and challenges, such as access to arts and culture, can be overcome.

Engaging professional artists can offer creative and unique perspectives to support the development of innovative and sustainable offerings. The greatest challenge is to explore *'what can be missing and how to sustain engagement beyond the project'*. To build sustainability into her projects, Susan often leaves materials behind for the course to be re-run and is happy to remain engaged with local groups. Susan provided a detailed curriculum (Appendix 1), examples of various printmaking techniques and a handout to participants on week 4 of the project

Building Stories

Building Stories was the name of the art element delivered as part of COPE at DCU. The concept developed by Susan focussed on printmaking promoted by memories, reflections and the impact of specific buildings in the participants' lives.

A recruitment poster was drafted and circulated among Social Prescribers working with the Social Prescribing Network (Ireland), attracting over 40 people to an information day (See Appendix 2) . DCU had decided not to limit the numbers but to offer the programme to all who were interested.

Due to the sensitivity of labelling people as lonely or isolated, the project was outlined in broad terms and referred to building new friendships and learning new skills. The curriculum was presented to the participants with samples of the work they would be doing (Appendix 2).

21 participants signed up for the programme delivered for two hours each week over 8 weeks in the Art rooms at St. Patrick's campus DCU.

The programme's location was particularly important as it needed to be accessible by public transport and have parking. The Art room chosen was on a ground floor location close to the main entrance and toilets, and refreshments were provided.



Participants met each week at 10.00 am in the art room. Each week they developed a new skill while building on the previous week's work and experimented with the materials and the buildings they would focus on.

By week 6, Susan reported that the *'Building Stories' workshop participants had been gaining experience in different types of printmaking, monoprints, stamp printing and lino printing. It's great to see their enthusiasm and progress, but the best part for me is seeing how through art-making we can share our stories of place and create connections*".

As the weeks passed, the group's confidence grew, and even though there were many chats and sharing, there was often silence as the participants became engrossed in what they were doing. At the end of the weekly course, the participants often met and ate lunch together.

Of the 21 participants who started the programme, 17 finished. Participants who dropped out were contacted and, when asked why they had dropped out, said:

"it was too difficult to travel to the university, I had to get two buses, and as I don't have free travel, it was expensive for me to take part"

"I had a few health issues which got in the way, and even though I would have loved to do more on the programme, I felt I missed a good part of it".

"I started on week 3 and felt the group had already clicked, I found it hard to break in - I wasn't excluded by any means, but I felt at a disadvantage".

"I started to think about things from my past, I grew up in an orphanage and it was hell, I wanted to do something different but it became an issue for me"

Over the course of the 8 weeks, the group really came together, assisting, sharing and listening to each other in a respectful manner. They were very excited by the prospect of an Exhibition and arranged to come to the university the day before the event to set it up. Every participant was presented with a Certificate of Participation. Some of the participants agreed to be interviewed on video. (Appendix 3)

Survey Report

At the end of the project, participants were invited to participate in a satisfaction survey. Due to strict rules and a requirement to apply for ethical approval in the university, the Warwick Wellness Survey was not applied to the participants. However, Social Prescribers who had referred participants to the program provided narrative feedback on the programme's impact on the participants.

Participant Feedback

The results from the Building Stories course satisfaction survey were overall very positive. 13 out of the 17 participants who completed the workshop filled out the survey, and data reflects views of 13 participants.

a. Communication

All participants (100%) thought the instructor effectively communicated course information and updates. They all felt they could easily contact the instructor for clarifications or additional support.

b. Location and Satisfaction

12 out of 13 participants found the course venue very satisfying, with only 1 participant finding it somewhat satisfying. The comments regarding the course venue were all positive, with people liking how the bus stop was right outside the venue and how the parking was good. Some other comments included the room and facilities were spacious and good, and the atmosphere was great.

c. Content and delivery questions

All participants (100%) found the delivery of the course content in the Building Stories workshop to be very engaging and interactive. 11 out of 13 participants also found the content covered to be very relevant and comprehensive. While some participants found the content to be neutral or somewhat relevant and comprehensive, no one thought the content was irrelevant or hard to comprehend.

d. Socialisation

84.6% of participants thought the course was beneficial to meeting new people and that it was socially engaging, and the other 15.4% of participants thought the course was beneficial to some extent. 50% of the participants met for coffee/tea outside of the classroom.

General questions

12 out of the 13 participants found their overall course experience to be very satisfying, while 1 participant found it to be not satisfying at all. There were no additional comments about why the participant found it unsatisfying, as all the survey comments were positive.

The survey showed that participants' favourite aspects of the course include:

- meeting new people,
- being with people their age,
- learning new skills,
- being in a relaxed environment, and
- having a great instructor.

At the end of the course, participants were asked whether they would recommend a course like this to meet new people and make new friends. 12 out of 13 participants answered they would definitely recommend it, with 1 participant saying they would recommend it with some changes. All participants who filled out the survey said they wanted to be kept informed about other DCU Age-Friendly activities.

Comments from the participants:

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Female)

"I would never have imagined the programme's impact on me, it's like a thirst to know more and learn more. I was delighted with what I achieved, the new friends I made and the confidence to look for more opportunities to engage with the arts".

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Male)

"As a farmer, these artsy things passed me by, and I never had a chance to do anything like this before. I was always working on the farm and busy, but as I got older and my family members died, there were days when I spoke to no one, I was very lonely. I've made a few pals, and the gang here at DCU are great. Very encouraging to an oul lad like me!!"

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Male)

"I thought it was mighty, and it brought me back to the memories of my parents and how times have changed. It has inspired me to try my hand at it at home"

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Female)

“I’d love to do it all again, it was just so fantastic”.

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Female)

“I bought all the materials and hope to continue with Susan if its a similar course or something else. I never thought I would be able to produce something like this”

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Female)

“I really enjoyed meeting the others each week and seeing what they did and then going for a cup of coffee and lunch was a bonus - we have really gelled as a group”.

Participant Building Stories COPE Project (Female)

“Im glad I came, I wasnt going to but then (AFU Coordinator) rang and she was very encouraging, the fact that I had an out if I didnt feel comfortable was great even though its hard to get to Pats it was worth the hassle”

Social Prescribers Comments

Three Social Prescribers gave general feedback on the workshop. These Social Prescribers are based in largely disadvantaged communities and work closely with local medical practitioners and other stakeholders in the healthcare sector.

The Social Prescribers expressed similar concerns regarding referring people to the programme and that it was a challenge to persuade some people to go because they

- had poor experiences with education and equated the location with negative experiences.
- felt it was too intimidating – not educated enough/no artistic skills etc.
- thought it was too far away and transport was an issue.
- felt that it just wasn’t “their thing”.

However, all three said that most of the people they approached were interested as they had a participant profile completed for each client and an idea of what might interest them. They

all reported that the programme was very well received by most of the participants who took part in the workshop. While some of the participants had complex social and psychological needs, the Social Prescribers reported that the positive impact of the programme on the participants alleviated some of these. Benefits included having a sense of purpose, making new friends, going somewhere new, learning a new skill, and having an interest in engaging in broader aspects of DCU's Age-Friendly Programme.

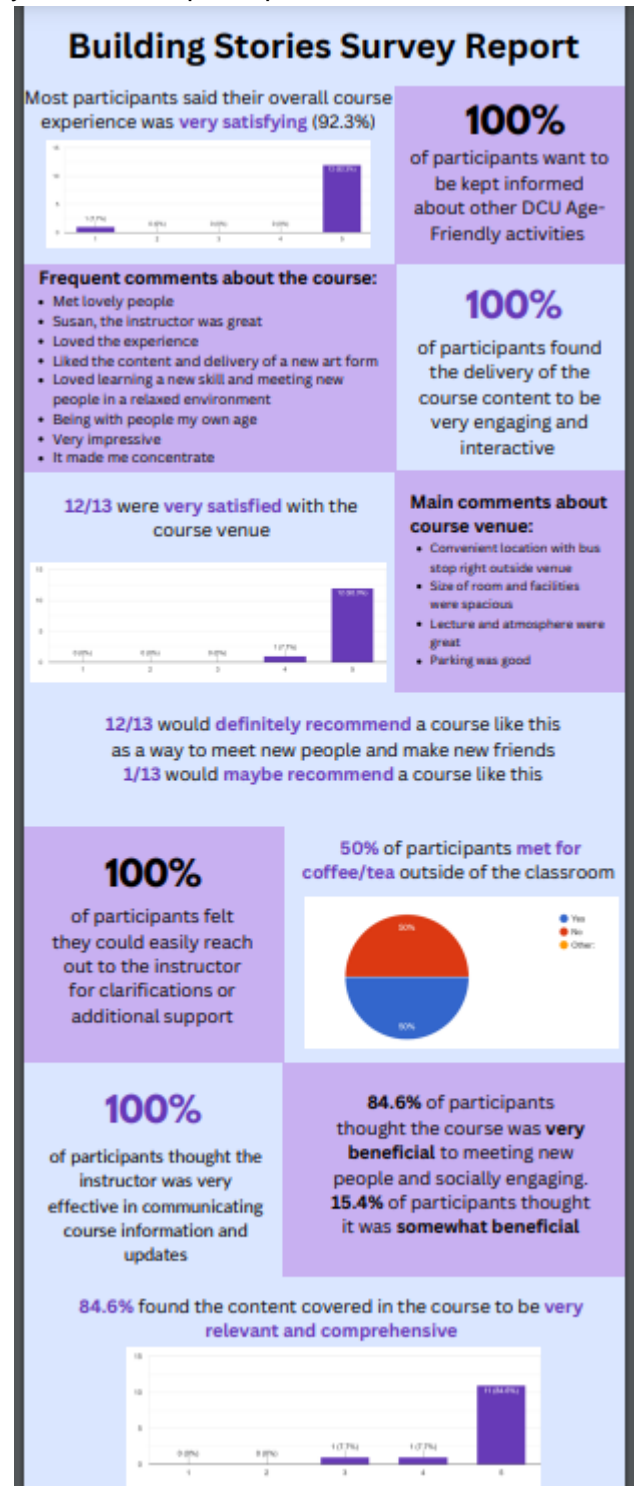
Voucher

The second phase of the Building Stories workshop offered participants the opportunity to visit the National Print Museum in Dublin (<https://www.nationalprintmuseum.ie/>), which preserves, protects and increases awareness of the unique collection and associated provisions at the Museum. It is committed to providing a wide range of socially inclusive opportunities for the lifelong discovery and enjoyment of Ireland's printing heritage. The visit took place six weeks after the workshop ended, and in addition to a tour of the museum, there was also a hands-on demonstration of printmaking techniques (Appendix 4).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that this project benefitted older people in the community and had impact.

DCU Age-Friendly has incorporated Printmaking into the AFU Programme for 2023 and will continue to offer places to older people referred by Social Prescribers.



Appendix 1

Overview of DCU Cultural Prescription – Building Stories Workshop by Susan Leen

| Class | Time | Plan |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| Open Day | 1 Hour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome - Overview of the course - Opportunity to ask questions - Opportunity to explore the space |
| Week 1 | 11.00 - 11.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Outline - Introduction |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | 11.55 - 12.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share examples of location/memory - Offer opportunity to bring your own images/texts/poetry/songs for the area - Questions and feedback - Mono printing intro |
| Week 2 | 11.00 - 11.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome - Introduce plan for the day - Explore the local area in song, poetry, texts, images, prominent buildings. |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---|
| | 11.55 - 12.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map the area as a group to exact information on the area. - Questions and feedback - Stamp printing intro |
| Week 3 | 11.00 - 11.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Discuss map from week 2 and add to this. |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | 11.55 - 12.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore different printing techniques - Trial different techniques - Questions and feedback - Lino printing intro |
| Week 4 | 11.00 - 11.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Having tried 3 different techniques participants choose which ones they want to develop with their final project. - Tryptych idea explained handout give with information. - Midway point so good to re-cap on techniques and see how ambitious or otherwise final project could be |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | 11.55 - 12.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop own image for printing: rough final trio of images |

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| | | - Questions and feedback |
| Week 5 | 11.00 - 11.40 | - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Continue with printing and sketching of buildings |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | 11.55 - 12.30 | - Continue with printing and sketching of buildings - Questions and feedback |
| Week 6 | 11.00 – 11.40 | - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Continue with printing and sketching of buildings |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | | - Explore links to texts/poetry/songs with prints and sketches of buildings - Questions and feedback |
| Week 7 | 11.00 - 11.40 | - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Continue with printing and sketching of buildings and matching with text/songs/memories, etc |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | | - Discuss curation – what is it, why it is important, why do it, how to do it - Some participants ready to mount prints |

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants asked to write a few lines on their piece. - Questions and feedback |
| Week 8 | 11.00 – 11.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcomes - Introduce plan for the day - Curate art exhibition of work - 'frame' prints with mounts - Prepare texts <p>*Participants invited to come and help curate and set up exhibition.</p> |
| | 11.40 - 11.55 | Refreshment break |
| | 11.55 – 12.30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do in-class exhibition – option to open to family and friends at a later date - Course discussion – highlights, new skills, etc |

This 8 week course will
Uncover your local area through Art

- You will explore texts, songs, poetry, memories related to the local area
- You will create pictures of the local area
- You will map the area with your class
- You will examine different ways to create prints
- You will create prints
- You will learn how to curate your work
- You will learn how to exhibit your work
- You will meet others and explore the images of the local area together

Appendix 2



JOIN US FOR AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW 8 WEEK ART COURSE



**Meet the artist, meet others, find out more about
the course, visit the DCU Campus**

Date: Monday, 17th April
Time: 10am - 12pm
Location: Room FG22, DCU St Patrick's
Campus Drumcondra
Tutor: Artist Susan Lee

More information about the course:
THIS 8 WEEK COURSE WILL UNCOVER YOUR LOCAL AREA THROUGH ART

- You will explore texts, songs, poetry, and memories related to the local area
- You will create pictures of the local area
- You will map the area with your class
- You will examine different ways to create prints
- You will create prints
- You will learn how to exhibit your work
- You will meet others and explore the images of the local area together
- The course will be delivered by artist Susan Lee and **is limited to 10 participants**

How to get to DCU St. Patrick's Campus:

Train: Maynooth service, phoenix park tunnel
service, Silgo/longform service- to
Drumcondra train station
Bus: 1, 11, 16, 33, 41, 41C

For more information or to book a place, please contact Grainne Reddy
(grainne.reddy@dcu.ie)

You can also register at this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/ej1FAIpQLScEb8jjQyqPn1Wqg75q1bHk6D49CwIHrERaSMZmKpWY272xw/viewform?usp=sf_link



Appendix 3



BUILDING STORIES

ART EXHIBITION

Building stories exhibition is the culmination of an 8-week print making workshop funded by Erasmus+ EU. Participants from the Culture on Prescription Project (COPE) researched buildings and places of personal interest to them and learned different hand printing techniques such as monoprinting, stamp making and lino printing. Using these techniques the participants created a trio of images to depict their place or building of choice.


**4 JULY 2023
10:00AM - 1:00 PM**

**LOCATION: INTERFAITH CENTRE, DCU
WHITEHALL, DUBLIN, D09 WPA0**

 **Co-funded by
the European Union**


APPENDIX 4

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION



NAME

HAS SUCCESSFULLY PARTICIPATED AND COMPLETED A CULTURAL PRESCRIPTION



“BUILDING STORIES”


30 JUNE 2023

AS PART OF THE

CULTURE ON PRESCRIPTION PROJECT




The Culture on Prescription project is the collaborative effort of multiple organisations from Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and Romania to identify current best practices in social prescribing.

Susan Leen
Art Facilitator



Christine O’Kelly
Age-Friendly Coordinator

Appendix 5

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
|  <p>CULTURE ON PRESCRIPTION</p> | COPE Voucher |  <p>DCU Age-Friendly University</p> |
| <p>This voucher entitles _____ to a visit to the National Print Museum, Beggars Bush, Dublin 2, as part of the Culture on Prescription Europe Project (COPE)</p> | | |
| <p>CULTURE ON PRESCRIPTION PROJECT</p> | | |
| <p>The Culture on Prescription project is the collaborative effort of multiple organisations from Ireland, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and Romania to identify current best practices in social prescribing.</p> | | |
| <p>Susan Leen Art Facilitator</p> | | <p>Christine O’Kelly Age-Friendly Coordinator</p> |
|  <p>Co-funded by the European Union</p> | | |



Buildig Stories Photos – Work in Progress, Print Museum, Exhibition



Our thanks to :

- DCU Artist in Residence Susan Leen
- Social Prescribers Ireland
- Building Stories Workshop Participants
- DCU Volunteers and Interns
- Ruby Cooney, Solveig Frugier, Katrina Murch & Devon King
- Staff of the Art Department, St. Patricks Campus, Drumcondra