



Building Best Practice through Partnership: Developing Arts Tourism in Ireland

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www.rich.dit.ie

rich@dit.ie





Arts Tourism in Ireland: Realising Potential

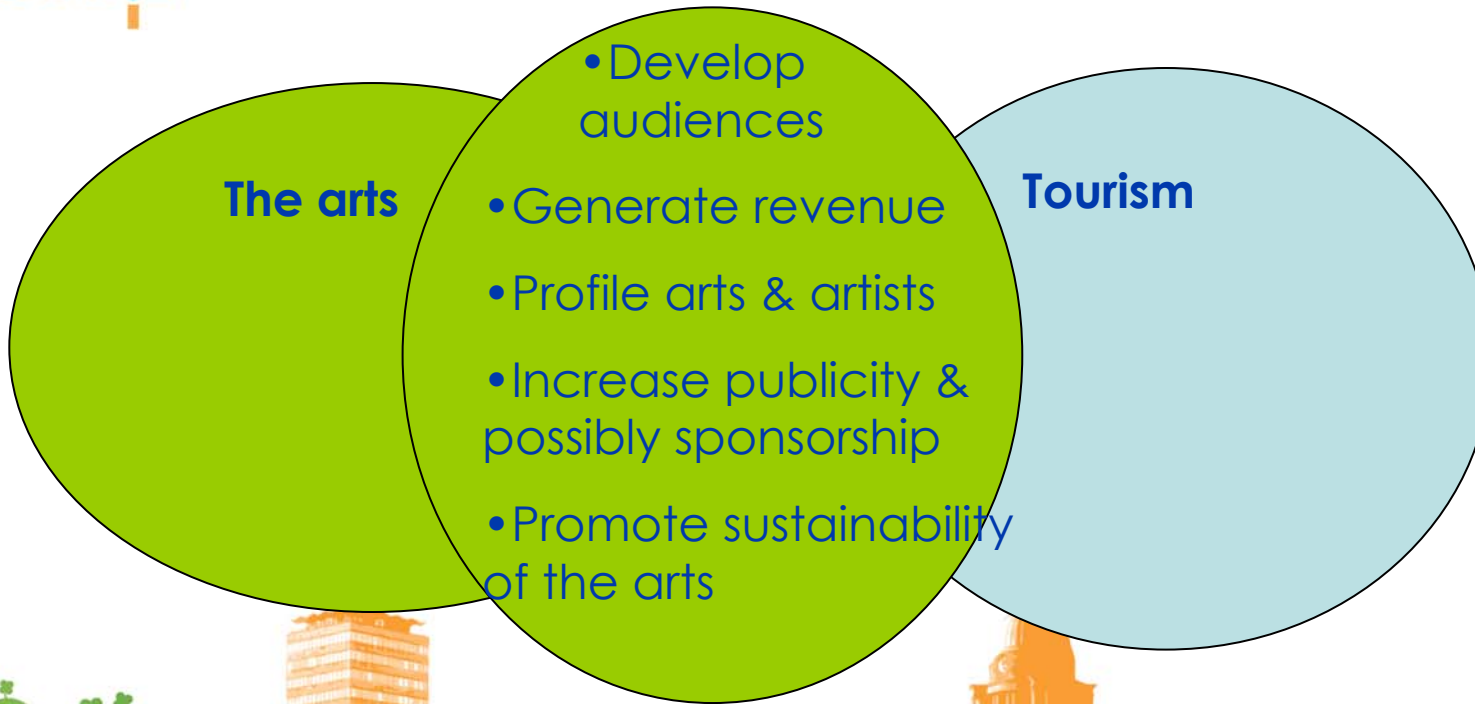
Dr. Bernadette Quinn, DIT
Department of Tourism &
RICH@DIT.ie



The arts create attractions for tourism
- which in turn –
supplies extra audiences for the arts
(Myerscough, 1988)



An arts perspective on arts tourism



A tourism perspective on arts tourism

The arts

- 'Experience'
- A core attractor
- Entertains
- Animates
- Boosts the evening economy
- Destination image-maker
- USP

Tourism

The state's perspective on arts tourism

Arts + Tourism =

- Wealth / employment generation
- Restructuring / Repositioning economies
- National image enhancement
- Leisure provision
- Education, personal development



Key Questions:

1. How effectively do the arts and tourism sectors work together in Ireland?
2. Are there any problems apparent in the arts and tourism sectors working together?
3. Does potential exist to develop a more mutually beneficial relationship?



The arts and tourism sectors working together in Ireland

- TIL - 'Sightseers and Culture Seekers'
- Post 2005 Cultural Tourism Strategy (FI)
- In 2006, accounted for some 2.5 million holiday visits, generating over 1.6 billion euro.



The arts and tourism sectors working together in Ireland

- Cultural activities and arts festivals significantly improve the holiday experience (TIL, 2007)
- *‘new and authentic experiences that can turn a holiday into a life adventure’*
- *‘unusual cultures, personal & emotional development’*



Fáilte Ireland's cultural tourism product audit

- Urban culture = 346
- Rural culture = 592
- Heritage = 648
- Historic Houses = 185
- Genealogy = 34
- Arts and Events = 1,893
- Gastronomy = 1,555



Extent of demand for arts tourism?

- FI's CT strategy, the 2.5 ml holiday visits based on 'visiting houses, gardens, monuments, museums, heritage centres, art galleries'
- Clear from FI data that 'arts and events' don't feature very prominently
- 'Art galleries' 8th on top 11 'activities to do' for domestic holiday-makers.



So, where are the arts tourists?

- A striking contrast between supply and demand figures why?
 - Awareness?
 - Quality?
 - Marketing / Branding?
- Consumer awareness of cultural tourism products is variable (FI) is awareness of arts tourism low?



Need to deepen understanding of arts tourists

- As the FI product audit suggests, cultural tourism supply can be categorised into specific areas e.g. arts tourism
- Has there been real recognition yet in Ireland that the cultural tourism demand may also be segmented?
- McKercher & DuCros (2002) – cultural tourism market is largely seen as homogeneous



Arts festivals are an exception - particularly high profile

- The 'perfect entrée' for the tourist seeking to engage with the destination and glimpse the everyday. (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998)
- Ireland - well established track record in strategically developing audiences through tourism, e.g. An Tóstal, Wexford Festival Opera, St Patrick's Festival





**Wexford
Festival
Opera**







Galway Arts Festival



- Since 2002, FI's *Festivals & Cultural Events Initiative* has significantly developed F&E's engagement with tourism
- First 5 years – 16 ml euro to 400+ festivals & events



Festivals & Events an exception

- In this sector – an arts tourism institutional context supporting festival development
- Fáilte Ireland and Arts Council – key **stakeholders** jointly **facilitating** this sub-sector
- Some data attesting to sizeable visitor demand for festivals – at individual festival level and nationally – FI data.



Are F & Es viewed strategically?

- Cork as ECOC 2005 attracted extensive regional, national and international media - mostly positive
- Attracted visitors of 1.1 million (Maloney 2006)
- 29* of 33 cultural organisations experienced an increase in audience numbers, from 14% - 200% (Quinn and O'Halloran 2006)



Cork ECOC – was tourist audience growth strategic?

- Little collaborative planning / marketing
- Poor attempts to direct visitors in the city to the cultural events taking place
- Only 8 of the organisations surveyed could quantify audience increases (Quinn & O'Halloran 2006)



Problems in arts & tourism sectors working together

- Sizeable international literature suggests that developing effective partnership is difficult
- A number of clearly identifiable problems that recur internationally
- Knowledge deficit: Limited Irish data – but consistent with international findings



Problems in working together

1. **Mutual lack of awareness**; Irish research e.g. Kennelly's (unpublished, 2003) empirical work on arts tourism partnerships in Kerry
2. **Unequal partnership** - awareness (on the part of the Arts) that tourism is in a much stronger position
3. **Compromise integrity, quality, creativity** - perception (on the part of the Arts) that engagement with tourism might be damaging (Schechner 1997, Kennelly 2003)



4. Different skill sets – ‘creative minds’ and ‘commercial minds’
= different priorities (Kennelly unpub. 2003)

5. Different language *‘In order for the arts sector to understand tourism, an appreciation of their language and terminology is necessary’* (California Arts Council 2006)

6. Variance in marketing skills - understanding audiences and marketing central in tourism often under-developed in the arts. Murray (unpub. 2000) looked at collective branding in popular music in Dublin



7. **Different operational time-frames:** Kernan's (unpub. 2006) study on performing arts and tourism in Dublin; Trew 2001 – UK study.

8. **Resourcing of the arts** a key constraint limiting linkages between the two sectors Kernan (2006).

9. **Poor ticket distribution** – no central ticket bureau, no central website



10. **Potential conflict** – continuing to grow visitor audiences while simultaneously meeting local audience needs (Quinn, 2003)

11. **Lack of leadership** at national stage + **absence of lobbying?** at local and regional levels (Kennelly 2003)



Thus far ...

- No question that arts tourism has potential
- But there are clear problems in
 - Knowledge/awareness/understanding
 - Resourcing
 - Product development/quality
 - Distribution / Marketing



At this stage, opportune to ask:

- Who are the key stakeholders and what are they doing?
- Where can leadership potentially develop?
- What fundamental actions might lead to improved awareness and understanding of tourism's potential for the arts, and vice versa



Next steps



- Building mutual awareness of potential in arts tourism development
- Need to critically debate what might be in the best interests of all parties

In 2004, there were over 10.6 million overseas visitors who participated in cultural and heritage tourism activities while within the country. (U.S. Department of Commerce)

California Arts Council



Next steps

- Need 'Facilitating Stakeholders' to demonstrate active leadership
- Role for public and private agencies in partnership
- Need both sectors to broaden policy thinking to encompass each other
- Need research to fill knowledge gaps



