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Scotland's Year of Stories 2022

**Telling the Story of the Community Stories
Programme – Executive Summary**

YEAR OF
STORIES
— 2022 —

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Date of document: March 2023

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Community Stories Programme was delivered in partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland, with support from NLHF and Scottish Government. This research was commissioned by VisitScotland on behalf of the programme partners.



Executive Summary

Delivered as a partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and Scottish Government, the Community Stories Programme supported 180 organisations and community groups to celebrate Scotland's Year of Stories 2022.

The Community Stories Programme was developed to provide an opportunity for community groups and organisations to deliver small scale events as part of Scotland's Year of Stories.

Highlights

Over 400 organisations applied for funding through the Community Stories Programme, and subsequently 180 projects were funded and delivered. Together this resulted in the delivery of over 1,000 events and activities that added to the overall programme of Scotland's Year of Stories.

The programme provided more than 5,000 artist opportunities, and over 900,000 audience/participant attendances were recorded.

Together these figures demonstrate the strong level of appetite among community groups and organisations to participate in the Themed Year, and also demonstrate how a community events fund such as the Community Stories Programme can extend the reach of the Themed Year as a whole.

This was possible as a result of the considerable investment in the programme, which was extended throughout the delivery of the project to respond to the high level of interest.

The programme has contributed substantially to the overall diversity of Scotland's Year of Stories. The programme elevated the stories of specific communities and groups, including telling the stories of Scotland's LGBTQI+ communities, refugees, and disabled people – to name just a few. In addition to this, the scale of the programme has extended the reach beyond the Open Events Programme, providing opportunity to involve communities all the way across Scotland in the Themed Year.

Key highlights of the Community Stories Programme include bringing communities together, providing opportunities to share community stories beyond the immediate community and showcasing the talents of under-represented groups.

The programme has brought about a range of benefits for grantees and communities. It has:

- Enabled them to expand the reach of their activities or reach new audiences
- Raised the profile of their organisations
- Supported them to strengthen existing partnerships or develop new collaborations
- Opened up new areas of work.

The partnership approach

The partnership approach to delivery has been successful, and both VisitScotland and MGS should be commended for their ability to deliver a growing fund at pace. Alongside the grant funding, MGS and VisitScotland delivered a wrap-around programme of support, which included webinars to support grantees to get the most out of their involvement, including advice on marketing, reaching audiences, and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), amongst others. The wrap-around programme saw a good level of engagement from grantees:

- There were 294 live attendances at webinars, and a further 355 video views
- Seventy-six per cent of organisations listed their events on the VisitScotland website
- More than a quarter of grantees shared information relating to their event on the ICH website.

Feedback on the wrap-around provision was positive, with 94% of survey respondents rating the webinars they attended as good or excellent.

Dedicated Community Stories marketing and media activity provided significant added profile for supported events and activities. One hundred and fifty-nine items of Community Stories media coverage reached people almost 4.3 million times, and the marketing campaign reached people over 2.3 million times.

The focus on ICH within the programme was also felt to have added strong benefits. In particular the focus on 'stories' was felt to provide a more accessible route for exploring ICH, which helped to boost awareness of ICH among grantees and wider partners.

Legacy

The Community Stories Programme has demonstrated how a community events fund can support delivery of the Themed Year, and therefore provides a potential model to be built on in future years. The scale of applications, and high level of positivity among grantees regarding the Community Stories Programme, also suggests that there is considerable appetite from community groups and organisations to engage more in Scotland's Themed Years.

Alongside the events and activities delivered within 2022, through the programme many organisations have also produced resources that will enable the legacy of Scotland's Year of Stories to live on, with podcasts, walking trails, zines and other materials produced that will continue to tell Scotland's stories.

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