

Cultural Development Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

There are many definitions of culture. The Arts Council uses a definition ‘Culture has been defined as everything we do not have to do’. From a citizen perspective, access (as a participant or as a spectator) to arts, heritage, sport and recreation, impact significantly on quality of life.

Exposure to a culture that supports creative development is an important indicator of a community's or a 'county's well being. Tipperary is the home of hurling and both hurling and equestrian activities thrive in South Tipperary. The County has significant heritage assets – the well known Rock of Cashel attracted over 250,000 visitors during 2000. The County is also strongly associated with the performing arts, especially drama and with crafts, especially basketwork.

The cultural kaleidoscope is continually changing – new developments in the Bru Boru Centre, Excel Centre, Sean Kelly Sports Centre, the County Museum, etc countering the loss of Regal Theatre, Carrick on Suir Theatre, Church of Ireland churches, dancehalls, etc – reflecting outcomes of both citizen, community and public investment and apathy.

The darker side of the cultural changes include the increasing amount of time spent watching TV (now averaging over three hours per day) and spent in pubs allowing less space for the traditional and niche sectors. In the years ahead, in-migration to Ireland will also pose new challenges in integrating asylum seekers and celebrating their culture. It is not a challenge that can be faced with confidence given the experience of the Travelling Community in being accepted and their culture respected.

<u>Cultural strengths (+)</u>	<u>Cultural weaknesses (-)</u>
<p>Range of cultural excellence – sport, music, theatre, heritage, crafts, etc</p> <p>There are some good facilities already in the county</p> <p>A local community radio which can reflect the culture of its franchise area</p> <p>More experience among key players in culture of outreach (especially supported by FAS schemes)</p> <p>Tipperary people have great pride in their county (especially its hurling and camogie achievements)</p>	<p>The sector is fragmented with individual groups operating largely in darkness – not aware that others face same issues and that unity could be strength in dealing with public bodies. The survival of many new cultural groups contingent on luck.</p> <p>The quality of facilities varies throughout the county. Some facilities are closed. Others cannot be easily accessed (especially by children).</p> <p>Previous efforts to co-ordinate Arts Sector in 1996 led to disillusionment</p> <p>Tipperary is divided into two administrative counties whereas the citizen associates with the entire county</p> <p>Lack of dedicated professionals whose job is to co-ordinate arts, heritage, sport, etc in the county</p>
<u>Cultural opportunities (x)</u>	<u>Cultural threats</u>
<p>The County Strategy can provide a vision that will add value to the cultural situation</p> <p>Agreement on a Facility Typology Strategy for county, sub county and community areas</p> <p>Get CDB consensus on the development of acceptable access strategies when public funding is given to any cultural facility</p> <p>Funding opportunities – Arts Council, Heritage Council, Irish Sports Council, etc</p> <p>Promote, export and import excellence in culture</p> <p>Celebrate minority cultures (travellers, asylum seekers, etc)</p>	<p>No National Cultural Strategy or Task Force (co-ordinating the Arts Council, Heritage Council, Sports Council, Crafts Council of Ireland)</p> <p>Local government and the public sector in South Tipperary may not take up the new opportunities to promote/advance culture in the county</p> <p>Decline in volunteers</p> <p>Focus of funding will remain on bricks and mortar rather than on the use of facilities</p> <p>Changes in lifestyles and the impact of mass media if the critical faculties of the South Tipperary population do not continue to be developed</p> <p>Danger of intervening too strongly in culture and ruining what is to be celebrated</p> <p>Increase in racism</p>