



Museum *of*
Childhood Ireland
Músaem Óige na hÉireann

FuturePastPresent
Drogheda

Report from The Museum of Childhood Ireland Músaem
Óige na hÉireann



“To take children seriously is to value them for who they are right now rather than adults-in-the-making.” Alfie Kohn

1. Drogheda - Child Youth Dialogues

The Museum of Childhood Ireland, as part of the collaborative FuturePastPresent in Drogheda (funded by the Heritage Council) for Heritage Week 2023, was delighted to deliver a children’s Voices initiative in Drogheda. The museum of Childhood Ireland delivered a children’s workshop, in a voluntary capacity, focused on the meaningful participation of children in the overall initiative.

The workshop involved an Evaluation, an introduction, a short presentation by Jamie McNamara, heritage specialist, followed by a Q&A, and a gathering of all the ideas the children have, their Perspectives, and on why and how they would like to participate, and where we could help/facilitate. All relevant Information was shared with the school beforehand. Preparation of workshop material took in the region of 4 hours. Post workshop work approximately 4 hours too. The workshop itself took 2 hours.

Leading from ideas in the workshop the museum approached Jessica Farrell, Lego Artist, to plan an initiative based on the children’s feedback. All children who took part were invited with their siblings/parents/guardians to attend the Lego workshop the museum organised for FuturePastPresent in HeritageWeek on Saturday 19th August in Drogheda.

They were also informed about Nathan Wheeler's fantastic Model Making Workshop.

FuturePastPresent - A project dedicated to working with young people and children that aims to democratise their contribution to the vital discussions we face around our built environments. This strand of the project focuses on Drogheda town centre, and the reasons why we think conversations on the town have become so contentious. How do we address the various issues? How do these issues impact the younger generation? What is the younger generation's view on conservation? Reuse? Restoration? What do they want for their future town centre? Are towns good for Climate? What are SDGs?

Through a series of workshops **FPP** explores questions and solutions with the people who will inherit the town-the children. It gives them the opportunity to stake their claim. It begins with the children of Drogheda, the next generation of problem solvers exploring those questions, facilitated by the Museum of Childhood Ireland who have extensive experience in participatory workshops.

The circularity of the project and the layering of possibilities are incredibly interesting. Youth participation as part and parcel of overall community participation is a key element in the Heritage Council's CTCHC Programme, and it underpins all work at the Museum of Childhood Ireland. It places children and youth as active participants with a voice at the core of this collaborative initiative. It places them front and centre. It ensures they are Seen and Heard.

With **FuturePastPresent**, as a collaborative model of best practice for heritage-led regeneration, the proposal aims to place children/youth as central agents in the overall discussion in the Drogheda **FuturePastPresent** Project and in participation beyond the project.

Pre Workshop

Liaising with Marymount school regarding class, time and day for workshop.

Introduction to Class teacher Sinéad Crilly.

Parent/Child consent forms were shared with the school and all children from the class were happy to participate.

Participatory discussion with the class teacher.

Participation pack offered to the school: Notes and sticky note packs/Pencils with erasers/Sharpeners.

All information on the FPP project, CTCHC Programme, the podcast on Putting Town Centres First, the museum, and information on SDGs was sent to the school.

Online.

Pre Workshop Evaluation.

Based on questions prepared by the MoCI.

Fourth class took part in a workshop about buildings, town centres, environment, climate and heritage as part of the FuturePastPresent collaborative project with the Museum of Childhood Ireland.

As well as taking part in the workshop, we wanted very much to hear the children's views on a few subjects before we began. This was to help us to understand how to facilitate children best in engaging with this project for their community.

Online Workshop

Welcome address and introductions to Majella McAllister, and Kayla D'Amato from the museum and specialist Jamie McNamara, explaining who we are and why we were workshopping with the students. That we value their opinion IF they wished to express an opinion.

Participation discussion to ensure everyone knew the format and ways to participate. Computer 'Chat' facility, writing down, asking a friend or the teacher to read out their answer or question, hands-up, email via teacher during or after the workshop etc

Introduction to the MoCI

Online Presentation to the children focused on meaningful participation in building regeneration / conservation in Drogheda by Jamie McNamara.

Discussion following.

The discussion posed the question of conservation and how it has such a vital part to play in the regeneration and uplift of our local towns, and the role that children have in this to be leaders in their community.

"I have found that curiosity coupled with a tenacity to ask questions is key to change. These qualities are not the preserve of the professionals like myself, far from it, towns are for all their inhabitants and users and therefore, I feel it is vital that these users utilise their voices to instigate positive change."

Jamie McNamara discussed a range of buildings, barriers, possible solutions, what can be done and the real challenges and considerations along the way. All of this was wrapped in a positive solution, 'why not?' tone.

The delivery of the workshop throughout was fully cognisant of the age group of the audience in the hope of making it a fun and interesting workshop for the children.

Presentation Reaction Notes:

An old abandoned mill, I wonder what it will be next? Any ideas? Sports centre, Museum, Hotel, school, creche, animal centre of excellence, indoor cycling, Homeless shelter, for Refugees, college, restaurant, art gallery, water park

What do you think the old, abandoned church (Scottish example) could be used for?

Apartments, a church, a disco/party place

What is Drogheda famous for? The Fort and the Abbey (Mellifont Abbey?)

What do the letters LU/LO mean?

- Look up/Look out

What do you think your town needs?

-Trees

-animals

-houses

-nice shops

-nature

-to be clean

-paint

-places to go

What would you like to see in the town?

-safe places for people, no traffic

What do you think the old building (example) could be? (The building is actually going to be a museum and arts centre space)

- Apartments
- Turn it into the museum of childhood for us all!
- Homework club
- Climbing walk
- cinema
- Houses
- Shop
- Club
- Petting Zoo
- School
- a sports shop upstairs

Does anyone have any idea what the old tall building is? (It was a water tower and is now a house for someone)

- Tower
- church
- castle

The Space on the right, what was it used for originally do you think? (it is now an underground museum)

- A yard or workspace
- (It was a dry dock)

How would you like to participate in FuturePastPresent?

We could look at maps just to begin.

We could do projects-lots of groups doing different ones.

If every school did a few different ones, we'd have a lot.

We could make and model things.

(Information on Nathan Wheeler's workshop sent)

Would you like to model using Lego? A resounding yes!

(information on Jessica's workshop sent)

Children's Questions for Majella and Jamie:

When did you start the museum? 2016

Why? *Out of respect for children and youth*

When did you get interested in the Climate and reuse? *My mother grew everything!*

In my childhood.

Is it hard to find new ideas for old buildings?

-We found an old semi-derelict building with a garden and we are turning it into the Museum of Childhood Ireland

- It is done through collaboration, thinking about what is missing, getting all the ideas out on paper and is not difficult

What was your inspiration to refurbish buildings?

-My father restored old buildings. I have too.

- When I visited TCD. Also seeing old buildings being torn down and misused in Dublin

If there is one thing you could make/save?

- For us to use any historic buildings that are abandoned so they can become housing, shops, museums, galleries or sports/recreation venues for people who need it. Any reuse even if temporary.

What would you turn a church into?

- They lend themselves really well to sports venues, concert venues, cafes, for concerts more specifically rock concerts!

What could an empty old house be?

- A new house in an old shell, they seem to be better made and more robust than newer buildings

How do you get into doing this?

- Go to museums, look at old buildings in your city, apprenticeships, start from the ground up, talk to lots of people, get involved in other things. Learn to do practical things like repair work. Love where you live

Would you like to be involved in more projects like this? YES!

Post Workshop

Liaising back to the school and students, collaborative partners and preparing the report. Organising the Heritage Week offering and the event using **2. Lego** with Jessica Farrell (Intergenerational workshops) for all day on August 20th. (Please see our second Report on this event)

Preparing the museum's **3. Perspectives** presentation

(the importance of child/youth informed decisions/participation) for August 17th.(Awaiting written feedback on Perspectives from Upstate Theatre)

FUTUREPASTPRESENT

PERSPECTIVES

A Heritage Week Event

17th of August 2023, 7.30pm

Barlow House, West Street, Drogheda

SOLD OUT

Part of FuturePastPresent project, the event will include guest speakers talking about the built heritage of Drogheda through the prism of their own experience and expertise.



FuturePastPresent
**Interactive LEGO® Workshop with
Professional LEGO® Artist Jessica Farrell
and
The Museum Of Childhood Ireland**

A relaxed, interactive and fun way for families
to explore their wishes and views
on the built heritage of Drogheda Town Centre

**Saturday 19th of August
Barlow House**



What Next!

Developing the child/youth workshops, displaying Lego from our event in Heritage Week and further Lego engagement events in Drogheda, perhaps at the library.

Report:

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MoCI FuturePastPresent-Drogheda Project Team:

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Yagmur Burhan- Museum of Childhood Ireland **Lego and Social Media**

Aileen Moon- Museum of Childhood Ireland **Social Media**

Basil Lim- Museum of Childhood Ireland **Lego**

Sonia Sarto- Museum of Childhood Ireland **Lego and Evaluation**

With Jamie McNamara, SPAB

Jessica Farrell-Lego Artist, and team of 3

