The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking

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The solution is in the problem

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The problem landscape

In 2015, the United Nation’s (UN) member states adopted the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formalising a global call to action to ‘end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere’ (UN.org, 2019). Emerging out of the eight Millennium Goals 2000–2015, (Un.org, 2019) the UN’s 2030 agenda for sustainable development offered a 15-year roadmap to transform our world. In 2016, the World Economic Forum at Davos discussed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where it was internationally recognised that it can no longer be ‘business as usual,’ given the projected 15 years to achieve the transformative change necessary for the wellbeing of humankind (Møller, 2016).

Critiques of the SDGs are varied (Esquivel, 2016; Gupta and Vegalin, 2016; Hák et al., 2016) yet a key flaw in the goals seems to be offering an approach to transforming the world without using transformative methods. Within the current model, despite being a valiant attempt, establishing commitment within the SDGs to ‘harmony with nature,’ their underpinning ambition of 7 per cent annual GDP growth in least developed countries and higher levels of economic productivity across the board is in keeping with existing neoliberal models (Hickel, 2015) and as such, sustainable development is an oxymoron. Criticism of sustainable development lies in the limits-to-growth (Meadows, 1972) model, recognising the earth’s finite resources (Georgescu-Roegen, 1971). Ultimately, any economic model that doesn’t acknowledge and account for this is bound to collapse.

The global challenges we face demand alternative systemic approaches (Gawande, 2014) with real commitment to making equitable change, at the local and global levels. This will require international top-level political commitment and the collective effort of all actors, at all levels. Developing a multi-stakeholder approach is critical if we are to develop innovative systemic methods with any long-term actions requiring cross-sectoral, generative, and consensus-dependent ownership and capacity (Møller, 2016). Placemaking offers a natural arena from which to develop such an approach. Placemaking, both as process and philosophy (Project for
Public Spaces [PPS], 1995), brings into contact two distinct aspects: the functionality around the everyday needs of people and more existential requirements that are further shaped by socially constructed processes.

However, for placemaking to fulfil its potential it must not fall foul of development agendas and commit to inclusive generative practices. Social and environmental decisions are often made based on economic costs rather than social or environmental value. Debate across the varied disciplines engaged in regeneration highlights the need to understand stakeholders in combination with professional and personal interests, yet an eco-systemic outlook is not fully integrated. For development to be considered regeneration and not merely development, there should be long-lasting beneficial impact on the communities and locations that experience the regeneration (Granger, 2010; Roberts, 2000), what Kate Raworth has called ‘thriving in balance.’ Yet, a majority of development approaches involve large-scale physical infrastructures, formulaic algorithms of urban hardware, such as new-build housing, mixed use and enterprise zones and possibly a work of public art, masking displacement. A more generative creative approach to placemaking should speak to the contemporary inclusion of social and environmental concerns. To be transformative, it should acknowledge multi- and inter-species activities towards positive redesign, reconstruction, or redesignation of existing land use and the set of quantitative planetary boundaries identified in 2009 by Stockholm Resilience Centre director Johan Rockström and 28 internationally renowned scientists. These boundaries are linked to the nine processes that regulate the earth systems and propose limits to enable humanity to thrive for future generations (Rockström et al., 2009). As anthropocentric climate change increasingly becomes a climate emergency these boundaries necessitate considering alternatives such as a ‘degrowth’ society, also known as a steady-state economy.

This chapter presents research from a pilot project, CoDesRes, that explores the evolution of an existing critical praxis for Creative Placemaking; the PermaCultural Resilience (pCr) praxis (McKeown, 2015) that addresses ecological economics, anti-consumerist, and anti-capitalist ideas. Trialled across differing socio-political contexts in London, Dublin, and New Mexico, the pCr praxis has proven to be effective in creating locally relevant and non-formulaic projects that contribute to community development. In the ‘century of the system’ (Gawande, 2014), and as a creative generative approach to placemaking, the pCr praxis is anchored in the belief that no single individual can change or be expected to change whole systems. As the limits to growth (Meadows et al., 1972; Roth, 1987) are reached, degrowth (Reichel and Seeberg, 2010; O’Neill, 2012; Martinez-Alier, 2012;) is considered the necessary approach to the resultant situation. Such an economy requires locally scaled solutions, rather than the ‘ever-increasing levels of extraction, production, and consumption’ (Brasuell, in Planetizen, 2015, paragraph 4). CoDesRes looks to leverage the SDGs and the 2030 agenda (UN, 2016) as a springboard to reimagine growth, within the context of a de-growth society through developing resilient resistant practices.

From threat to opportunity

Trauma linked to fears and grief in response to climate collapse is increasing. Sudden and abrupt change, particularly from events we have little control over, leave us vulnerable physically and emotionally. Case studies considering the influence of community on mental health show that the communities that fare better under existential and disaster threats are those that not only have resources but demonstrate community cohesion and support (Berry et al., 2010, 2008; Beaudoin, 2007) or a sense of agency. Within the context of resilience, this offers an opportunity for different ways of thinking about situations; by creatively and imaginatively providing
opportunities for locally scaled community activities that contribute to survival based on an integrated approach to social, environmental, and economic capitals. Research studies justify tackling resilience and sustainability challenges at the local level (McKeown, 2015) owing to manageable, tangible scales of governance more readily identifiable by citizens.

Maurice Strong, Secretary General of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992 Rio Earth Summit), stated that local government should lead the way, an idea quickly enshrined in local Agenda 21 frameworks and reminiscent of early Rene Dubos’ 1972 maxim ‘think globally, act locally’ (Moberg, 2005) initiatives taking responsibility around tackling sustainability issues is complex and risks the ‘governance trap (Hobson, 2010); when citizens expect their elected officials to act, yet simultaneously have no trust in the government’s messaging regarding an accurate ecological position or their ability to follow through, with suitable action (see also, Rowson, 2013). Understanding upcoming challenges is further complicated as they are often both spatially and temporally removed and distance individuals from the impact and consequences of their actions.

Yet, if we were to adopt a ‘beyond-compliance’ culture, then the need for ‘culturally situated local approaches that include multiple world views and a systemic design thinking perspective that integrates science’ and technology (McKeown in De La Garda and Travis, C., 2018) offers a fertile research opportunity. How can we engage with the needs of multi- and inter-species, necessary for a healthy system critical for our own survival sit within placemaking practices? What could an eco-systemic, situated arts-led approach have to contribute to implementing the SDGs on a local scale in an attempt to create an accessible generative approach, rather than current exploitative approaches? How might we support a sense of agency in our communities that facilitates resilience?

Co-designing for resilience – the role of a Creative Placemaking critical praxis

Visual arts have been identified as an ideal field to support the effort of promoting resilience within young people through developing a sense of belonging, sense of identity, self-awareness and self-esteem and an ability to cope, and learning artistic skills and gaining confidence (Hart et al., 2012). Hawkes envisions the importance of a cultural framework at the heart of planning that enshrined values within policy-making and transcended a simple service delivery model, arguing for ‘an active consciousness of the values, which inform our actions’ (2001, p. 15). This is necessary to ground productive social action as ‘clear, creative and engaging processes for facilitating community expression and debate of those values and their practical application’ (ibid.). Hawkes’ promotion of the arts acknowledges ‘the right to be actively involved in making our own culture’ (ibid., p. 24) and its opportunity to contribute to an understanding of being agents in survival, through activities that simultaneously build on collaborative and socially equitable practical actions through creativity and imagination.

CoDesRes operates a bespoke critical praxis for Creative Placemaking, a systemic arts-led situated approach to placemaking while leveraging the momentum around the 2030 agenda to embed resilience and resistance thorough education and community toolkits. It integrates social, environmental, and equitable economic concerns within arts-led actions and place-based STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering Arts, Maths) to develop local improvement that acknowledges more than human needs. Through encouraging creativity and imagination CoDesRes contributes to a localised exploration of a de-growth economy; addressing social, environmental, and economic inequalities while maximising wellbeing and happiness through non-consumerist means. As an operating system, the ‘role’ of the pCr praxis presents an Open Source resilient approach to Creative Placemaking that encourages a triad of capitals – social,
environmental, and economic, to be integrated into the process as a means to cultivate the creation of conditions towards a healthy resilient eco-socio-cultural ecosystem.

R – Relationships. Using an intensive audit tool to map cultural, economic, socio-political and environmental dynamics, the pCr praxis reveals relationships, resources, and opportunities to help reconfigure and reimagine an understanding of place. Stakeholder consultation is the first stage in the process. The construction of flexible micro-ecologies aids the revelation of multiple knowledge cultures and entities, integrating their place-based knowledge, valued for its potential to contribute to a local resilience.

O: The OBREDIM process log is a three-phase tool that deepens the pCr audit undertaken in advance of developing any project or intervention, adapted from Permaculture and integrated into Design Thinking for situated art practices (where the art emerges out of a specific situation and is context responsive). The first step in the pCr process is to map the skills, activities, and resources of the community using the OBREDIM log; what they already do and how this might contribute to sustainable development and community resilience. This develops the ability to see the localised system, strengths and weaknesses, gaps or bridges that can be built upon. Only then will interventions be created, partnerships brokered, and projects developed, seeding the praxis, adapting and iterating it as necessary.

Figure 29.1 The role of the pCr praxis, McKeown 2016.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBREDIM AUDIT</th>
<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Details reference: What to look for and record.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit Phase</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>O – Observation Phase 1</td>
<td>Survey all local organisms e.g. organisations, stakeholders, businesses, arts and cultural organs, community groups, charities, people, animals, vegetation, socio-cultural landscape, history, news / media, politics. Try to create as full a picture of the residency ecosystem.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>W – Ways and things to observe: Patterns of growth, distribution, town layout business layout etc. Traffic flow, people motion, dead spots, flow of information, traffic people, the dynamics; social, cultural physical. Is there an impact? Does it last? Where’s it start and stop?</td>
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<tr>
<td>N – Natural system aspects: Weather, Sun, Water sheds, air, flora fauna animals, migration routes or diversions of water, desertification, forest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H – History: what’s changed and why is a pattern, does this have impact on the future? Communities; connections and relationships, distance/proximity, inter-species, inter-generational. What is successful? What has been adapted and there any common traits?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any recognisable patterns, numerical patterns? Are their functions of these patterns? Look at textures / shapes – Draw them, photograph them, record audio, use the senses; What can you see, hear, taste, smell and touch.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – Evaluation Phase 2</td>
<td>The edges / limits of the ecosystem; the location’s geo boundaries, organisational boundaries, people’s responsibilities, shared values, cross-over of aims, power dynamics. Limits to growth expansion, Laws, regulations and policies. Where do things stop and start? Are there diversity, tensions and encounters? Is there a difference between the edges and centre?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoning analysis: This can highlight responsibilities, existing partnerships, focus for effort.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Questions: Venues: what’s there, what does it do, how does it function, who sponsors events. Groups: who’s doing what, when and with who?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R – Resources Phase 3</td>
<td>Design on paper. Becomes a map for the implementation stage or if there’s an existing project in mind re-design in light of information gathered in Phase 1 and evaluation stage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – Design</td>
<td>Implementing design: include logistics eg timelines, production milestones, communication, fundraising, skills needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I – Implementation</td>
<td>Implementing the project and any maintenance needs or opportunities to evolve the project, handing over passwords, admin details, resource directory, everything needed to move the project forward or maintain its existence and evolve it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M – Maintenance</td>
<td>Maintain the project and any maintenance needs or opportunities to evolve the project, handing over passwords, admin details, resource director, everything needed to move the project forward or maintain its existence and evolve it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 29.2 OBREDIM Log 1 (adapted McKeown, 2008–15) forming the pCr audit (McKeown, 2015).

L: Lifecycle analysis. The pCr framework offers a simple visual tool that embeds an eco-social commitment within Creative Placemaking by addressing the full life-cycle of a project and beyond. By plotting the position of the inputs, processes, and outputs across Zones 1 to 5 of a project against the proximity of a project’s ‘Zone 0,’ an initial assessment of all production processes can be considered.

E: Evaluation. The pCr toolkit includes an evaluative matrix, the pCr Vital Signs Matrix based on the concept of the vital signs of a project and contributing to the vital signs of a place (McKeown, 2015). The vital signs act as indicators of a healthy human and non-human system. The matrix, developed through the research, defined the following foundational characteristics necessary for the pCr praxis of Creative Placemaking: Building Micro-ecologies; Strategic Intervention Tactics; Re-seeding Local Knowledge; and Resituating Arts, Design, and Culture. It further integrates a triple bottom line – earth care, people care, and fair share. An additional indicator, the Inclusive Fitness Theory (Hamilton, 1964, 1963), offers a metric to gauge project impact, used to evidence where the pCr ethos and methods spreads into other organisations or working practices towards long-term behavioural change.

The pCr Vital Signs Matrix tool can also be used as a collaborative project development tool that serves as a foundation to addresses social and environmental equity within a project; short-, medium-, and long-term. The methodology also developed an extended concept of SMART goals, to SMARTER, that sought to integrate goals reflective of the current and future context; S – Socio-culturally specific, Simple, and Sincere; M – Meaningful as well as Manageable and
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Measurable; A – Appropriate, Achievable, Aspirational and Ambitious; R – Relevant, Responsive, Reviewed, and Revised; T – Timely and Time-specific; E – Eco-considerate and Ethical; R – Resilient, Resistant, Resourceful and far-Reaching.

A number of evaluative methods were used depending on the context, e.g. Transition Year (15 to 16 years) second-level education or community contexts. Within the school each class was evaluated using a 3-2-1 method; (three things they learnt, two things they would like to know more about, and one comment on their overall opinion of the class or improvements). We also undertook a World Café session with each class (75 students) and a focus group at the end of the year with 20 student participants. The praxis also has a practitioner’s reflective log for self-evaluation, providing a systematic approach to gathering data of the lived experience and harnessing the practitioner’s knowledge beyond the project context. The community projects were evaluated using the pCr matrix, which clearly showed the project over-delivered within the timeline. Each of the community groups had a different focus, which again offered an opportunity to consider the praxis within different dynamics, foci, and project. These evaluation processes enabled the team to trial ideas and not only consider aspects that were successful but gain feedback on how things could be improved and what didn’t work.

Co-designing for resilience on the Iveragh Peninsula, SW Kerry, Ireland

CoDesRes’ non-formulaic whole systems approach was transferred to a rural context in South West Kerry, Ireland to develop the creative placemaking praxis as an accessible toolkit and education curriculum that enabled self-organisation for resilience. Funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2018–2020), the project is located on the Iveragh Peninsula, an area defined in the National Spatial Strategy as Rural Area 5, marginal and highly diversified, representing ‘an almost “post-agricultural” rural economy with areas of high natural amenity, attracting high levels of tourism, recreational usage’ (NSS, 2000) and in some cases non-farming residents, e.g. retirees or second-home owners. However, Kerry is one of the most sparsely populated counties in the state, with low birth rates, high death rates, high aged dependency, and high levels of emigration, creating a population stagnancy that is contributing to demographic shifts, which in turn impact on the region’s sustainability.

The research design explored the integration of the existing Creative Placemaking praxis within three fields – Marine Ecology; Environmental Science; the Arts, Media, and Engineering – and through three work packages – Youth, Community, and Media Transition – with each work package working across a number of projects in the education and community settings. This focused the research on SDGs 4, 11, 14, and 15 as a context-responsive approach to key areas pertinent to an Irish rural context; waste and the relationship between the Green and Blue Economies, in County Kerry, which has the largest coastline in Ireland. The interdisciplinary team included: an artist-scholar and educator; two marine biologists, one with a focus on coastal communities; an engineer; a media artist; and a curriculum developer giving the team access to a broad range of prior knowledge and experience. From additional funding from NAISC, Living Iveragh, and Community Social Enterprise the research greatly benefited from the inclusion of an artist and Seanchai (storyteller) (O’Laoghaire, 2020) and local resident.

The pCr methodology in earlier trials had shown the importance of encouraging a systemic approach to education and community development that facilitated a creative re-visioning and challenges to dominant narratives through proof of concept. Through formal and informal learning, the project team trialled and iterated the following activities that would share the pCr principles, circulate economic ideas, and develop the foundation for the project, with key outputs including: best practice guidelines, curriculum resources for place-based STEAM.
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educational and community creative placemaking toolkits. The curriculum resources include lesson plans, activities, and teachers’ resources for Transition Year students based on the SDGs in particular SDG 4, 11, 14, and 15 with a set of continuing professional development training/resources for second-level teachers and other professionals. The open source toolkit for self-organisation for Creative Placemaking endeavours to create a set of tools for community organisations to integrate the pCr creative placemaking praxis easily and effectively within their organisations and activities. In addition, the project offered media training and rapid prototyping as the foundation of a media and repair café/maker co-op, ‘Remade in Kerry,’ at the core of a localised innovation and knowledge network. Local residents and volunteers from community organisation, once trained, had access to bookable equipment and ongoing support that enables them to support each other to create media content or develop micro-enterprises.

Although, the project’s work packages had distinct aims and objectives, the skills and peer-to-peer knowledge of the whole team are integrated into all packages. Further, the project simultaneously undertakes its research while sharing a proof of concept for place-based rural development and creative placemaking. That is, the rural has a role to play in the development of sustainable communities and cities by developing viable opportunities that can offer realistic alternatives to urban dwelling. By positioning local residents within a satellite research faculty as an intervention into local sustainability and resilience, the project simultaneously explores and develops positive economic social and environmental links between the rural and urban contexts. With recently produced reports (namely Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework (2018b), and the Draft National Marine Planning Framework (2018a)) communities’ ability to engage critically with these issues will be an important contributor to personal and ecological resilience and, where necessary, resistance. Ireland, as a small island, must engage with the particular exchange and relationships that occur between land and sea. Both youth and community transition work packages mainly focused on exploring two issues identified as key concerns through a number of local and national government development aims and recommendations (Prescience, 2019; DES, 2015) – waste as resource, and land ecosystem health including freshwater and marine ecologies: the Blue–Green economy.

Outputs and initial findings

During the course of the project and its various events and methods the project delivered 183 events, had 4,927 direct project engagements and 5,467 digital followers, 59 written outputs including papers, blog posts, and articles, 23 working partnerships, and raised an additional €359K funding with €34.7K in kind support over its 2.5 years. At the time of writing the project has another six months until completion, with all resources including the website and links to the evolving toolkits shared on Github from August 2020 and www.codesres.ie until July 2021. The project’s research design involved the creation of STEAM place-based learning interventions that would contribute to quality education (SDG 4) formally and informally with thematic content focused on Life below Water (SDG 14) and Life on Land (SDG 15) to contribute to Sustainable cities and resilience communities (SDG 11). This organising principle was applied to the development of the project’s delivery, enabling different aspects to be presented and iterated within training and educational contexts, which then informed the foundation of an accessible toolkit for communities and educators.

During the education study 94 per cent of the Transition Year students stated that they were worried about the future. They questioned what the future would be like, if they had one, and stated that lack of information was not helpful to them. They also stated that the adults around them, who they looked to for protection did not seem to be engaged in issues of climate change,
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adding further anxiety to their already anxious state. They appreciated the knowledge and discussions in the classes and although the classes were challenging at times due to the content, they also understood that without having a realistic understanding of climate change and sustainability it was difficult to make changes. In line with the NCCA review (2016–2020) of the Senior cycle (university entrance exams) students’ evaluation clearly showed the interest and needs for citizenship and political education; sustainability and climate change education and opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and applying their knowledge. Students enjoyed the group work, practical and interactive activities, and recognised the importance of the skills embedded in the lessons. Due to the Irish curriculum there are some foundational skills that need to be developed and the work with the students identified this was mostly in technology and how to apply their knowledge to contemporary issues.

*CoDesRes*’ place-based STEAM approach embeds critical thinking, problem-solving, collaborative learning; creativity, innovation, and research skills within a localised tangible context that is connected to global concerns. This enables them to gain skills and competencies beyond the curriculum and opportunities to apply these within real world contexts. Within the community context a number of issues, many not unusual within community contexts, were apparent: high levels of volunteer burnout, highly talented and skilled people, yet full skillsets unknown or under-utilised, and a lack of collaborative partnerships, despite shared aims. Further, with regards to localising the SDGs it was clear that extensive work already existed but was not being captured within SDG reporting. Work Packages 2 and 3’s desk-based research, regarding education and community groups, identified clear actions contributing to SDGs 4, 11, 14, and 15 targets but yet non mentioned these goals and, in instances, the groups were unaware of the SDGs. In the community context, using the pCr Vital Signs Matrix, the following initial findings have emerged.

**Building micro-ecologies**

Through the OBREDIM audit the project developed a web of complex relationships and systems and, by embedding a circular economic approach, facilitated a creative, innovative, participatory development of place that included local under-valued knowledge through 23 working partnerships, including the expansion of the local Tidy Towns activities to include embedding campaigns and activities locally; for example, wild flower planting, beach cleans, and Grow Your Own. *CoDesRes* facilitated place attachment as a motivating factor to encourage agency and action from project constituents. As a situated, networked co-production *CoDesRes* encouraged citizen-led agency within localised tangible activities, evidenced by increased engagement in events, including the St Patrick’s Day and Christmas parades and their organising and planning. These are important contributing factors for developing resilience, with varying place-attachment and engagement depending on place, people, and their interactions.

**Strategic intervention tactics**

*CoDesRes* was designed to encourage social, environmental, and economic justice into resultant projects, through tools that facilitate the capacity to bounce back through localised tangible activities. The methodology supported the diversity of projects produced, many of which challenged local narratives, for example, ‘that won’t work,’ offering proof of concept that evolved over time. *CoDesRes* used local festivals to engage with SDG 11, embedding themes and aspects of SDG 14 and 15. An increasing attendance meant events became self-sustaining with many of the performers choosing to donate materials for future community projects and committing
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to participate. As a deeper, slower, richer (McKeown, 2015), intervention that uses existing and emerging peer-to-peer networks and self-organising methods and commons-based approaches to societal change, participants are encouraged to participate in a more sustained and direct involvement with civil society and governance, becoming more competent and confident in their ability to set agendas and influence policy outcomes.

Re-seeding local knowledge

The ‘StoryBank Educational Programme’ for primary schools, based on the ‘make-do and mend’ ethos that is still within living memory, created channels of information and conversation, through the students, into the wider community, further creating a renewed pride in keeping things for longer and learning a new skill set and attitude. The project also developed the concept of the circular economy to include knowledge ensuring useful knowledge is utilised as ‘active currency’ circulating within the system.

Resituating arts, design, and culture

There is increased understanding of the importance and potential of the arts, design, and culture within community resilience, design and development evidenced by the increased financial and in-kind support that has been agreed by funders and community participation and attendance. Events reimagined the local narrative by increased confidence to try new things in supported ways as well as encouraging organisations to reconsider ways of working. Organisations are now engaging more with an arts-led/creative approach and starting to develop their own initiatives. St Patricks Day Parade’s participation increased over two years to 26 floats, many with SDG-related themes, with the local Tidy Towns group taking on the co-ordination in Year Three.

As a proof of concept, CoDesRes showed in tangible ways what happens when a systematic Creative Placemaking approach that integrates social, environmental, and economic justice is employed to insure generative outcomes. The research team and local residents, operating as an intervention, showed clearly the potential to generate positive economic social and environmental potential. The resilience, physical and emotional, required to manage future scenarios is not currently embedded in education, community development, or placemaking. The CoDesRes research explored the potential of making an existing methodology accessible by repurposing it within these contexts. Ireland is a small island, ranked second worst country in the European Union fighting climate change (CAN, 2018); this means a country with junk status could face annual non-compliance costs of around €500 million if it does not take immediate and efficient action (2018). Physical impacts predicted are sea-level rises, river coastal flooding, water shortages, and impacts on water quality, to name a few. If it is to have any resilience it will need a multi-stakeholder approach, which requires appropriate relevant and agile policy, good governance structures, and ‘networks of experience and capacity building’ (EPA, 2019). The project conditions are not unique to Ireland, however, and methods proving successful or contributing to the SDGs in these contexts could be transferable to other areas that experience a ‘post’ economy or migration. The initial findings could also contribute to the European agenda; the uptake and implementation of circular economic principles in their approaches to tackle environmental, societal, and economic problems.

Despite their adoption globally, there are no legal mandates to deliver on the the SDGs and their reach is limited. The EPA funding opportunity enabled CoDesRes to take the nascent pCr praxis, an arts-led bio-psycho-social co-production of place, and explore the potential of localising the Sustainable Development Goals to actualise existing but latent potential. The CoDesRes
project facilitated increased self-organisation within Iveragh’s community development by applying a bespoke critical praxis for Creative Placemaking; an eco-design thinking approach to local concerns; and a process of developing innovative solutions collaboratively and systemically.

**Conclusion**

*CoDesRes’* Creative Placemaking praxis is locally scaled and integrates the concept of *Oikos*, the crafting of home, the ‘house territory to town cosmos’ (Bateson, 2000, p. 187), into placemaking. Through this process, the connection to actions and participants’ feedback into the system affecting change, both positively and negatively, becomes perceptible. Creative Placemaking’s potential to make and re-make *Oikos*, the ethical management of resources and equity of capitals, transforms Creative Placemaking towards a process of becoming; actualising potential embedded within the knowledge cultures, creativity, and innovation inherent in all communities. The potential value of the concept and practice of *CoDesRes’* Creative Placemaking praxis is in the development of socio-cultural ecologies of participation that are imaginative, creative, and equitable. Such ecologies sustain localised agency, recognise and actualise latent potential, offering possibilities embedded within *CoDesRes’* methods to a return to *Oikos*. By encouraging citizens to ‘think globally and act locally’ (Dubos, 1972) tangible contributions to systemic change occur though the local ecosystem.

To date the *CoDesRes* project is the only arts-led place-based approach to the Sustainable Development Goals in Ireland. As a pilot research project, *CoDesRes* looked to leverage the SDG 2030 agenda as a springboard to reimagine growth, within the context of a de-growth society through developing resilient resistant practices. *CoDesRes* explored a possibility of moving from the old model of industrial growth and development towards a systemically generative approach for rural areas that is localised. The project was open-source and a proof of concept *CoDesRes* shows there are additional opportunities to develop many of the project’s templates to be self-sustaining offering viable realistic alternatives to urban dwelling. Residents and organisations have already begun this process. As part of *CoDesRes’* legacy, additional funding co-supported by a local philanthropic organisation, Living Iveragh and CPL Ltd, Ireland’s largest recruitment company, has been secured to continue to build out the place-based STEAM education tool kit and trial it in other locations. In addition, *CoDesRes* also contributed to Kerry County Councils Rural Regeneration Development Fund Bid to repurpose a derelict building to create a centre of excellence for place-based STEAM education, research, and mixed-reality learning centre. The project contributed to the employment of 10 people, built capacity in the local organisations and research assistants, and helped to establish a local business to develop its research reputation. The core team are now working on a national project, MARplas, utilising the pCr praxis as part of a co-design process to develop rural micro-enterprises through a circular economic approach to marine plastic waste (Sea Synergy, 2020).

By asking ‘what’s at stake?’ on a local scale the *CoDesRes* project embeds sustained stakeholder engagement by broadening the concept of stakeholding. This also brings into play under-utilised community potential, which aids the facilitation of citizen inclusion in governance and decision-making through active engagement with problem-finding and solving. This in turn leads to a localised resilience, through increasing agency and self-organisation. By encouraging social and environmental equity, the production and sharing of knowledge, the development of opportunities to cope with diverse conditions, and capacity building, the project has initiated the creation of an expanded identity for a number of villages in the region. While *CoDesRes’* approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on a local scale is an accessible
The solution is in the problem

generative approach it will not cure all ills, but it does help seed a resistance to neo-liberal development practices, by creating viable alternatives.

References


Anita McKeown


Further reading in this volume

Preface: Placemaking in the age of COVID-19 and protest
Jason Schupbach
Chapter 2: Placemaking as an economic engine for all
James F Lima and Andrew J. Jones
Chapter 3: An annotated history of creative placemaking at the federal level
Jen Hughes
Chapter 4: A future of creative placemaking
Sarah Calderon and Erik Takeda
Chapter 7: Conflict and memory: human rights and placemaking in the city of Gwangju
Shin Gyonggu
Chapter 12: Public transformation: affect and mobility in rural America
Lyndsey Ogle
Chapter 13: Sensing our streets: involving children in making people-centred smart cities
Sean Peacock, Aare Puussaar, and Clara Criellaro
Chapter 14: Experts in their own tomorrows: placemaking for participatory climate futures
Paul Graham Raven
Preface: The radical potential of placemaking
Cara Courage
Chapter 20: Displacemaking 2015 and 2020
Catherine Fernell and Daniel Tucker
Chapter 22: Embedded Artist Project: Epistemic Disobedience + Place
Frances Whitehead
Chapter 24: Artists, creativity, and the heart of city planning
Tom Borrup
Chapter 23: Routing out place identity through the vernacular production practices of a community light festival
Gail Skelly and Tim Edensor

Chapter 36: Facilitator skills for effective collaborative placemaking
Husam AlWaer and Ian Cooper

Chapter 39: Translating Outcomes: Laying the groundwork for interdisciplinary evaluation of creative placemaking
Jamie Hand

Chapter 40: Transforming community development through arts and culture: a developmental approach to documentation and research
Victor Rubin

Chapter 43: A theory of change for creative placemaking: the experience of the National Endowment for the Arts’ Our Town program: an interview with Patricia Moore Shaffer, PhD
Maria Rosario Jackson

Chapter 44: Creative placemaking and comprehensive community development: rethinking neighborhood change and evaluation
Maria Rosario Jackson