



2025: **Unity and Diversity - searching for balance**

Previous conference themes:

2024: *Cultural diversity – An Obstacle or an Opportunity in Shaping a Cohesive Society?*

2023: *From Security to Solidarity: Challenges of Integration in the Times of Crisis.*

2022: *Together or Apart: Searching for the Middle Ground.*

Bridging Borders: Fostering Impact and Connection through Cultural Collaboration – a British Council Perspective

British Council

We....

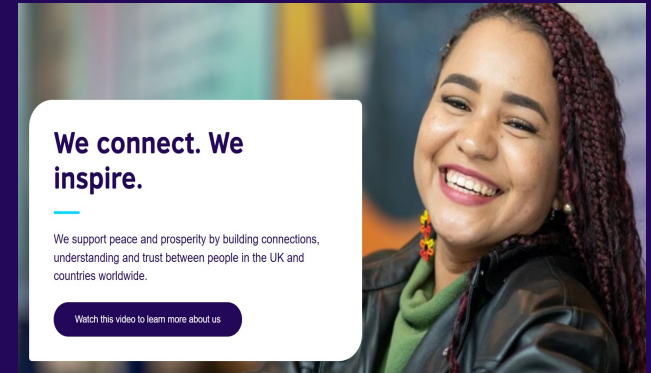
- Build trust, respect, and intercultural understanding through values-led, partnership-focused cultural relations
- Are focussed on making local impact with global relevance
- Work in partnership to nurture relationships with government leaders, policymakers, senior advisers, cultural leaders and the wider public, to help us achieve more than we could do alone
- Organised into 7 Regions, have 100 country operations, 10,000 employees and,
- In 2022, we worked in over 200 countries and territories reaching over 600 million people

www.britishcouncil.org

We connect. We inspire.

We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

[Watch this video to learn more about us](#)



UK – Ireland... *some key facts*

- The UK is Ireland's 3rd largest trading partner and Ireland is the UK's sixth.
 - Last year we exchanged over a 100 billion euros in goods and services.
- No. of British in Ireland just moved to second place as the largest group of foreign nationals in Ireland, (people from Poland are now the largest).
- Numbers of applications from students in Ireland to the UK has jumped by 14.6% in 2025 and is now just over 6,000 (compared to 5,290 in 2024).
 - Ireland is only EU country to show increase in enrolment numbers to UK year-on-year (+2.9 per cent) and has become the largest EU student-sending country.
- Many award winners, media personalities and celebrities in UK are Irish.
 - Liverpool Irish Festival is the UK's largest Irish arts festival, celebrating its 22nd birthday in 2025.
 - 1 in 3 Mancunians are lucky enough to have Irish ancestry.



- Ireland is the only country with annual summit with UK and the **UK-Ireland 2030 Joint Statement** is an ambitious programme of cooperation between both countries.



Culture Connects: Lives Entwined Reception and Performance

We partnered with the British Embassy in Dublin on a Culture Connects: Lives Entwined reception and performance on 10th March 2025.



Sustainability Through Festivals: A Collective Approach

We partnered with Dublin International Film Festival as part of their 2025 programme on a panel focusing on how festivals can act as catalysts for improving sustainable practices.



Celtic Connections 2025

We supported Irish delegate Juno King to take part in Showcase Scotland at Celtic Connections, Glasgow, 22-26 January 2025.



Culture Connects: mapping UK Ireland arts & cultural connections

British Council Ireland commissioned research to explore arts and cultural connections between the UK and Ireland.



CoMUSEUM International Conference

We supported three delegates from the ULYSSES European Odyssey project to participate in the 14th CoMUSEUM International Conference in Greece from 4-6 December 2024.



Outburst Festival 2024

We supported visual artist, diversity, equity and inclusion advocate and writer, Pradeep Mahadeshwar, to attend Outburst Festival 2024 in Belfast, Northern Ireland.



British Council Literature Seminar 2024

We were delighted to support Simon O'Connor, Director of the Museum of Literature Ireland, to attend British Council's Literature Seminar in Berlin from 14-16th November 2024.



Beta Festival

British Council Ireland were delighted to support Beta Festival, Ireland's first art and technology festival.



Higher Education Information Guide: UK - Ireland

We are happy to share our higher education guide, developed to provide information to students from Ireland wishing to study in the UK, and students from the UK wishing to study in Ireland.



Higher Education Mobility UK and Ireland

Our research shares new and strategic insights on UK-Ireland higher education collaboration, student mobility, institutional engagement and alumni engagement.



Universities UK International (UUKI) Delegation Visit

We are partnering with Universities UK International (UUKI) to support an inward delegation of representatives from UK universities to Ireland in March 2025.



UK Ireland Alumni Reception

British Council Ireland and the British Embassy in Dublin hosted an inaugural UK Ireland Alumni Reception in 2024 and will host a second in March 2025.



International Education Programme: Wales Study Visit 2025

We partnered with the British Council International Education Programme Unit on a study visit to Ireland for Welsh school teachers and local authority stakeholders from 10-14 February 2025.



Higher Options 2024

We took part in the Irish Times Higher Options for the second year to disseminate information and promote the UK as a study destination to Irish students.



Global Perceptions: UK Ireland

On 27 March 2024, in collaboration with Cooperation Ireland, we hosted a focus group with 15 young people to explore British Council's Global Perceptions 2023 Survey.



Youth Connect in Europe

Youth Connect supports young people to develop the skills, inspiration and connections to tackle major challenges.



Jane Austen 250 – Creative Postcards 2025

In partnership with the British Embassy Dublin and the National Library of Ireland, we are proud to take part in a creative initiative to mark the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth.



Empowering Voices: LGBTQ+ Youth Untold Stories

We are delighted to support Empowering Voices: LGBTQ+ Youth Untold Stories. This project brings together young people from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, North-West of England, Wales.



Media literacy in the age of AI

Explore how AI shapes media and learn to spot bias, misinformation and deepfakes in Youth Connect's new season.



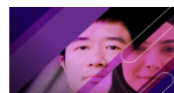
Climate Change

Our climate change activities bring young people from across EU Europe together to share ideas and reflect on how we can meet challenges of the climate crisis.



Gender Equality

This course prepares young people to make a difference to gender equality issues through building their leadership capabilities.



Social Cohesion

The social cohesion strand of our Youth Connect programme aims to increase trust at community level by facilitating the creation of spaces and platforms for public discussion.

IRELAND

www.britishcouncil.org

Be a catalyst in strengthening the bilateral relationship in Arts and Education

Act as a valued broker and convenor nurturing growth

Build connections and collaborations, create opportunities and insight, foster networks and skills

meitheal

meitheal

WAR POSTCARDS

AN ART EXHIBITION FEATURING ARTWORK FROM 26 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IRELAND, THE UK AND SPAIN.



CLIMATE POSTCARDS

AN ART EXHIBITION AND POSTCARD EXCHANGE FEATURING ARTWORK INSPIRED BY ARTIST JANE YOUNG, FROM 38 SCHOOLS IN IRELAND AND THE UK.



IDENTITY POSTCARDS

AN ART EXHIBITION AND POSTCARD EXCHANGE FEATURING ARTWORK CREATED BY 26 SCHOOLS FROM IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

BRITISH COUNCIL
British Embassy
Dublin

Jane Austen 250 – Creative Postcards 2025



BRITISH COUNCIL
Youth Connect

CFA Creative Futures Academy
Think Young

MEDIA LITERACY IN THE AGE OF AI

National College of Art and Design (NCAD)
Dublin
6-7 November

BRITISH COUNCIL
Research

Cultural Mobility and Connection: Ireland and the four nations of the UK

November 2025

BRITISH COUNCIL
RESEARCH

Policy Insight

Higher Education Mobility

UK Ireland

BRITISH COUNCIL
Research

Language Trends research series

Global Perceptions 2023

Global Perceptions: UK Ireland Report

March 2024

IRELAND

Reach

In 2023-24 we reached:

28,338 Students
389 Education Leaders
36 Artists
50 Arts Leaders
12 Community/CSO/
 /NGO leaders

Publication and Broadcast: **35,525**

Website: **252,061**

Social Media: **13,390**

Online: **67,952**

Face to Face: **23,274**

Total: 399,491

"Connecting with other people in this exploratory space is helping me see and feel my place in all of it."

Dance and Ecology Light Moves workshop participant

"The skills and techniques I learned have proved invaluable in my academic pursuits, and I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to attend such a transformative event. I want to express my appreciation to the British Council Ireland and Malcolm Love for working together to coordinate this project."

Academically Speaking workshop participant

"It has been a genuinely revolutionary experience for me and one which I will be incorporating into my research and practice going forward!"

AI for the Common Good Hackathon Participant

In 2024-25:

Students: 22,670

Education Leaders: 1100

Artists: 319

Arts Leaders: 189

Community/CSO/

NGO leaders: 76

Publication and

Broadcast: 196,000

Website: 218,592

Social Media: 13,754

Online: 52,103

Face to Face: 8,004

Total: 488,469

Country Activities



www.britishcouncil.org



Ireland – Northern Ireland

[Film25 | British Council](#)

Film25



British Council Ireland
Partners



Monday 10 April 2023 to Sunday 30 April 2023

**Peace is not a destination; it is a journey
that requires constant effort and
commitment.**

Martti Ahtisaari

www.britishcouncil.org

PEACEPLUS CONNECT



- 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2029
- Cross-border and cross-community
- Delivery in 6 counties in Northern Ireland and 6 counties in Ireland
- €2,08 million over the next four years



PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government



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Overall objective: To contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland.

Specific objective: To promote positive relations characterised by respect, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

The 3 major activity strands: **Communities – Festivals – Media**

The three working strands within PEACEPLUS CONNECT

Communities Connect

- Led by Politics in Action

Festivals Connect

- Led by Create
- with Assoc Partners: Arts Council Northern Ireland & Arts Council Ireland

Media Connect

- Led by the British Council

PEACEPLUS CONNECT

Impact groups

3,464 people
from different
communities and
backgrounds engaged
in regional level
projects and building
relationships.

CONNECT will place particular emphasis on providing support to most marginalised /harder to reach within our communities.

These include:

- Women
- Older people
- Migrants and refugees
- People living with disabilities
- People with issues arising from the legacy of the conflict including ex-prisoners and security service personnel
- Members of the Traveller Community
- Members of the LGBTQIA+ Community



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Communities CONNECT

A community leadership programme led by Politics in Action that aims to bring together communities with civil society to address multiple 21st century crises: from climate change, gender inequality and unemployment to alienation and conflict.

Training for trainers

based on the 'Civic Community Work' model

Community mapping workshops

online introduction workshop followed by a day-long face-to-face workshop

Thematic workshops

cross-border engagement organised on a cross-community and cross-border basis

Community social action projects

based on agreed action plans supported on an ongoing basis by project members and facilitators

Festivals CONNECT

A programme led by Create aiming to engage with existing festivals and provide opportunities, centred in cultural democratic approaches that foster inclusive social engagement and build sustainable structures to continually develop community-led programmes and partnerships.

Co-design Steering Group

Cross-community co-design steering group guiding the development phase based on previously identified needs and co-designing subsequent programme with focus on future challenges and opportunities.

Training workshops

Programme of bespoke training workshops to upskill practitioners in areas of community engagement and principles of collaborative and inclusive arts practice.

Peer-to-Peer Connections

Consortia of geographically dispersed individuals and a leading practitioner working together for approx. 3 months.

Diversity in Practice

Staff and volunteers trained on community engagement focusing on diversity and inclusion in practice.

Festival Makers

A core group of cross-community contributors convened to co-design and develop content for the programme of the biennial 'Festival Makers' conference in Ireland.

Media CONNECT

A training programme led by the British Council that will weave the community and festival strands together.

Media training online and with local education institutes (peace journalism/ fact-based journalism/community cohesion)

Networking and dissemination actions

including a launch event, two Community Collaboration Spaces, and a final celebration event.

Cross-community workshops

for 500 journalists, digital media content creators, students, community members and representatives of CSOs/ Festivals aiming to introduce critical journalism for positive social change. With 7 ed providers

PEACEPLUS CONNECT

Impact Areas

- Build capacity (cross-border and cross-community)
- Develop new community leaders and volunteers
- Conflict resolution interventions
- Improve and sustain relationships by addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance
- Engage those with opposing and dissenting views
- Increase civic participation
- Increase minority and women's participation in public, social, cultural and political life
- Facilitate positive cultural expression within diverse communities
- Work towards sensitive and inclusive cultural expression and celebration



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PEACEPLUS CONNECT

Most of all...

- By promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity, placemaking, and mutual respect,
- the project creates opportunities for people from across and within the border counties of Ireland, and Northern Ireland,
- to participate, learn, and cooperate with each other by building mutually beneficial connections and celebrating the diversity, distinctiveness, creativity and innovation of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.



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"Our greatest obligation as human beings is to be good ancestors and take the best actions we can take"

Tim O'Connor

*Former Irish diplomat & one of the
architects of the Good Friday Agreement*

Thank you for listening...