



## Engaged Research Case Study Template

**Project Title (8 words max)**

Creative Agency with young refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

**Arts and culture**

**Project synopsis (100 words max)** Please give a very short description of the societal challenge, the action taken, and the intended/ achieved result.

The Glucksman Gallery in UCC empowers young people living in direct provision through creative engagement projects that nurture self-expression, build confidence and provide transformational cultural experiences within the civic space of a university museum.

Social Inclusion, Health, Wellbeing, Education Research undertaken by UCC staff has shown that “Direct Provision is a key contributor to and has caused serious mental and physical health deterioration in people seeking asylum; it fails to recognise people’s most basic social, cultural, gender, ethnic, and religious needs; ...it systematically isolates those seeking asylum, and enforces institutionalisation and powerlessness”

The Direct Provision centres are permeated with an atmosphere of lethargy, anxiety and dread and although it is more expensive and organisationally challenging to bring the young people to the university museum, it is a necessary first step towards establishing a more creative dialogue with them.

Working with academic partners in Applied Social Studies and Food Business and Development who knew the residents, the needs of the children and the expectations of the project was crucial. The relationships that our colleagues in UCC have developed over 15 years with residents of Direct Provision centres meant that they had garnered a trust and understanding that we at the museum would have been unable to achieve in such a short period of time.

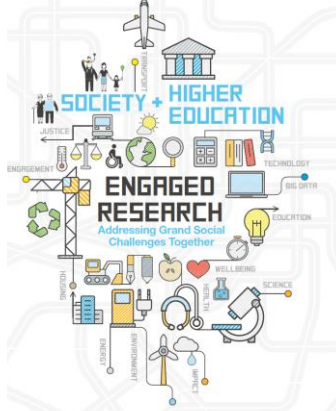
The children were involved in age appropriate and capacity building activities through different themed art projects since December 2015. Working with



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	<p>professional artists, the children experienced the immediate enjoyment of time away from the restrictive conditions of the Direct Provision centres, as well as learning skills that they can pursue once the project is complete. In addition, each of the projects has an exhibition outcome which enables their voices and views to be represented in the public realm. Working with young people living in Direct Provision has been in equal measures some of the most rewarding and most heart-breaking work undertaken at the museum. The projects showed that these children are incredibly brave, generous and kind-hearted. Their lives have been ones of struggle, distress and in some cases trauma, and still their determination and positivity shines through. They truly need to feel the power of creative agency.</p>
<p><b>Higher Education Institution:</b></p>	<p>University College Cork</p>
<p><b>Engaged Research Partners</b> (civic, civil society organisations, Social enterprises, public or professional service or product users, policy makers, members of the public).</p>	<p>Direct Provision centres in Cork city and county Children’s Books Ireland Laureate na nÓg Art Council of Ireland Scouting Ireland</p>
<p><b>Engagement (research method or activity) (100 words max)</b></p>	<p>The experience of working with young refugees, asylum seekers and migrants over the last two years has given us a glimpse of the positive impact this work can have on their childhood and adolescent development. There is extraordinary power in providing a place where young people can start to express themselves creatively, away from the confining structures and atmosphere of the Direct Provision Centres. We measure this impact in the artistic work created by the young people, testimonials from all those directly involved in the projects, and the success of the presentation of the projects in the public domain through visitor numbers, visitor responses and media coverage. For wider society, the ongoing commitment of the Glucksman to young refugees, asylum seekers and migrants positions them visibly within the civic space of the museum. Enabling the children to express their own views in the public domain encourages positive attitudes to the young people as well as an awareness of the limiting physical spaces in which they must live out their childhood.</p>



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**Project outputs and outcomes: (600 words max)**

Please describe briefly the target audience and activities that occurred and short terms results.

This information could include:

- who you worked with;
- issue to be addressed
- what actions you took;
- the geographical location;
- any shorter-term outcomes or changes in local situation and circumstances, knowledge and skills attitudes or behaviour, policy, practice, organisational development etc, decision-making.

The output are as follows:

- From December 2015 – December 2017, the Glucksman has provided six different creative projects of six to eight weeks duration targeting different age groups from 5 – 18 year olds. The group met once a week to explore themes of place and belonging through the creation of individual artworks, as well as working collaboratively towards the creation of large scale artworks. The projects took place in the Glucksman and on the wider campus of UCC. The Glucksman co-ordinated transport, provided meals and art materials to the children to ensure their full participation in the project. On average, 15 – 20 children are engaged in each project.
- The Glucksman’s Director, Professor Fiona Kearney, has presented to the UCC Governing Body Committee on Students and the UCC Student’s Union.
- Curator Tadhg Crowley has shared case studies of this work at national conferences with colleagues in the arts, academic and museum sectors as well as contributing to professional blogs that disseminate our actions in this area.

The outcomes are as follows:

- These project provided a welcoming, safe and creative environment for those still in Direct Provision and those seeking to adjust to life in their local community.
- The plight of these children was highlighted to wider society through the exhibition of works, and media coverage of the art projects.
- The Glucksman is part of a wider network of University College Cork staff that are seeking the designation of University of Sanctuary status for University College Cork.
- The Glucksman considers that the future success of the project relies on the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and recently received a financial commitment from the Arts Council of



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	Ireland to support the creative elements of this work on an annual basis.
<p><b>Longer term anticipated areas for Impact</b> (Choose from below):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic</li> <li>Policy &amp; Public Service</li> <li>Societal Engagement</li> <li>Health &amp; Wellbeing</li> <li>Professional services</li> <li>Environmental</li> <li>New knowledge</li> <li>Human Capacity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Societal Engagement</b> The project has impact implications for both the participants and wider Irish society. The projects' twin objectives of firstly, providing meaningful, creative experiences for a severely disadvantaged community, and secondly, increasing the visibility of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in society through their own representations, are in keeping with the strategic purpose of various funding bodies as well as being of potential interest to donors.</p> <p><b>New knowledge</b> <b>Human Capacity</b> As a university art museum, the Glucksman is also uniquely positioned to share its work with academic colleagues who can influence policy and practice, and we will work with all relevant disciplines to ensure that the transformational impact of this work on the children themselves is part of wider and informed advocacy to end the system of Direct Provision.</p>
<p><b>Funding source:</b></p>	<p>Grants from the Arts Council of Ireland, Community Integration Fund and the Ireland Funds, as well as additional financial support from UCC Student Societies, in-kind support from UCC Visitors Centres, and student and staff volunteers.</p>
<p><b>For more information contact:</b></p>	<p>Professor Fiona Kearney and Tadhg Crowley (Glucksman Gallery)</p>