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## The role of artistic activity in rural communities

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Art-led initiatives are now commonplace in rural contexts and can play an important role in revealing and potentially in shaping relationships and development.

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### What are the research findings?

We know from research that art activities in rural communities:

- Are often seen as a driver for economic growth.
- May demonstrate greater engagement from rural than from urban communities, despite fewer funding opportunities.
- Can help to create a sense of belonging.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction that is critical for rural community wellbeing.
- Can bring communities together in common creative purpose.
- Can help to rebrand rural places in support of rural development.
- Can demonstrate nature as being central to community meanings, practices and spaces.
- May be most effective if not labelled overtly as “art”.

### What are the implications for rural policy?

The arts are currently not exploited to their full potential for rural development and could, with minimal investment:

- Be utilised as a way to explore and understand conflicts of interest within rural communities.
- Help understanding of community relationships when development is being planned.
- Enhance understanding of residents’ relationships with the landscape and the natural environment.
- Foster social and civic participation.
- Enhance residents’ sense of place and community meaning.
- Build understanding of local cultural capital.
- Provide a means of bringing together external and internal resources in rural development.

## Further information:

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