

The Scottish International Storytelling Festival at UNESCO Creative City of Literature Edinburgh.

→ Climate Action SDG 13; Quality Education SDG 4

Storytelling as a means of advancing sustainable development? The Scottish International Storytelling Festival in the city of Edinburgh shows that this is possible and is a remarkable example of how culture can lead in this area.

The annual Festival, which has been awarded £100,000 by the Platforms for Creative Excellence Fund (PLACE) set up by the Scottish Government and the City of Edinburgh Council, uses storytelling to tackle global and national issues such as climate change and inequality.

Thanks to the grant, this year's festival featured a brand-new project called the Global Storytelling Lab which combined indigenous traditions with tales of radical activism, included talks from storytellers such as Extinction Rebellion activist Grian Cutanda, and saw the launch of the world's first anthology of Earth Stories, aligned with the principles of the Earth Charter.

The Festival also organised 100 new locally-led events across the country to empower and encourage groups and individuals to share their own stories with the wider communities. Collaborations with local storytellers also helped to unearth forgotten and lesser-known local stories, songs and rhymes.

Storytelling promotes intercultural exchange, it fosters mutual understanding and can strengthen a sense of community. According to Ruth Kirkpatrick, Chair of the Scottish Storytelling Forum: 'There is a hunger for the kind of community belonging, and the hospitality that traditional storytelling fosters.'¹⁵⁷

So celebrating Scotland's rich literary and oral heritage through storytelling is a great example of how UNESCO designations can use culture to engage with and contribute to the Sustainable Development Agenda.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ruth Kirkpatrick, Chair of the Scottish Storytelling Forum, quoted in Press Release of Scottish international Storytelling Festival 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Press release of the Scottish international Storytelling Festival 2019





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