

Creative industries may hold the key to economic prosperity in coastal and rural communities

September 1 2022



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Increased investment in the creative industries and improved levels of business support could be the key to helping coastal and rural

communities reduce their reliance upon tourism for economic prosperity.

Better access to investment, the creation of peer-to-peer support networks and flexible apprenticeships are all among the recommendations contained in a new national report that assesses how popular seaside resorts and country towns might move beyond seasonal tourist cycles and support year-round economic development.

Published by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Center (PEC), the report—Creative Industries Innovation in Seaside Resorts and Country Towns—is based upon extensive research conducted by experts at the University of Exeter. This included interviews with scores of businesses across the South West, which paint a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities facing similar regions around the country.

"While the seaside towns and villages of Devon and Cornwall are bustling at this time of year, our research shows that creative businesses in the region need more year-round investments and opportunities to thrive," said Dr. Lucy McFadzean, Research Associate at the University of Exeter.

"We saw that many of Devon and Cornwall's creative businesses were resilient over the pandemic, accessing new online audiences and clients and benefitting from COVID support funds that were not reliant on strict parameters like [business](#) density. This showed us the benefits of [creative industries](#) investment in a region where applying for and accessing funding is historically low."

As part of the research, Dr. McFadzean conducted in-depth interviews with more than 30 businesses from different sub-sectors of the creative industries in the South West. The project team, which also included Gabriella Giannachi, Professor in Performance and New Media, Joanne

Evans, Creative Industries Impact & Partnership Development Manager, and the University's Business School, further consulted with stakeholders including Cornwall Council and Torbay Culture and held action learning workshops with a range of companies.

They found that firms, from [graphic designers](#) to film-makers, were keen to invest in the skills and careers of local young people and support their ability to remain living and working in the region. However, a lack of access to finance and to the level of national and local government [support](#) that creative industry businesses in "urban clusters" receive, has been holding them back.

The often project-based nature of creative industry work was highlighted as another factor that can make it difficult for firms to provide full-time employment. To address this, the report calls for more investment in flexible apprenticeships specifically in creative industry occupations that would allow employment across multiple businesses over a set period. The report goes on to recommend more formal coordination for sector-specific networks to facilitate peer-to-peer networking, learning opportunities and knowledge exchange, all of which would help to bridge disparate locations and large geographical areas.

"On the evidence of this work, there is a clearly-defined ambition to establish creative ecologies in coastal and rural areas—and an understanding of what we need to get there," said Joanne Evans.

"Businesses are ready to pick up the baton and that is a very optimistic sign. But there are recurring barriers as well—such as the need for better transport links and [affordable housing](#)—and that is why it is important that the Leveling-Up agenda doesn't fall down the priority list of the incoming Prime Minister."

More information: Policy briefing: Creative industries innovation in seaside resorts and country towns. [pec.ac.uk/policy-briefings/sea ... ts-](http://pec.ac.uk/policy-briefings/sea...ts-)

[and-country-towns](#)

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: Creative industries may hold the key to economic prosperity in coastal and rural communities (2022, September 1) retrieved 20 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-09-creative-industries-key-economic-prosperity.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.