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## Craft Entrepreneurs thrive on business support

*New craft businesses showcase talent at launch of Creativity Innovation Fund*

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[Story Begins] A talented group of young craftspeople showcased their work in Limavady earlier today demonstrating how business support initiatives can help the craft sector achieve its economic potential.

The creative showcase supported the launch of a new £5m Creativity Innovation Fund by Culture, Arts and Leisure Minister, Gregory Campbell.

The aim of the fund is to support creative industries such as craft and stimulate business growth.

The showcase included seven craftspeople who recently celebrated their successful completion of a two-year business incubation programme, *making it*, designed specifically for craft entrepreneurs.

Since it began in 2005 with the support of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the programme has facilitated over 22 craftspeople to establish themselves and take their first steps in business in Northern Ireland by providing access to new technologies, equipment and business advice.

Speaking at the launch the Minister said,  
***“The craftspeople and their work on display here today demonstrate how a little support can go a long way in creating opportunities for creative businesses.”***

***“In supporting the making it programme (through ACNI) over the past 3 years we’ve seen rapid business growth. The Creativity Innovation Fund***



***aims to initiate similar support programmes to encourage future growth of the creative sectors.”***

***“In supporting initiatives to develop innovation and quality of the creative industries we can help creative entrepreneurs to make the most of business opportunities both here at home and internationally.”***

Adam Frew, one of the craftspeople on the programme, has a studio based at Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart.

Over the past 2 years Adam has developed his pottery business and now has a growing portfolio of international clients.

***“I do think of myself first and foremost as an artist and craftsman” says Adam.***

***“But, to succeed in the global marketplace, you have to be a hard-headed entrepreneur as well.***

***“There’s no doubt that many young craftmakers can greatly benefit from a programme of government support designed to assist them in fully exploiting their international potential.”***

The potential of support initiatives for developing new markets is clear, says Director of Craft NI, Joe Kelly:

***“Through the making it programme we have supported 22 new craft entrepreneurs with business resources that was never before available to the craft sector.”***

***“The Creativity Innovation Fund will help to fuel innovation and quality of the wider craft/creative sector in Northern Ireland”, says Joe Kelly.***

***“This fund recognises that micro businesses, within the creative and cultural sector, have an important contribution to make to the growing economy.”***

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