



**Peace IV Cross-Cultural Strategic Initiative
CultureFuse**

Evaluation Report

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Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
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Background to the Project

The development of CultureFuse as an initiative has capitalised on previous relationships and efforts between a number of key stakeholders involved in community development. Droichead is a community based project that developed in 2012 when Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin was the lead partner in delivering Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013. The strategic objective adopted by the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Executive Committee in May 2102 was to make the 2013 Fleadh “ inclusive of the entire community in the city”. This was achieved successfully and sparked a relationship with the Londonderry Bands Forum (LBF) that grew into a formal working relationship with the North West Cultural Partnership that includes the LBF. In 2017 this partnership of organisations, successfully tendered to deliver a Cross Cultural Strategic Initiative funded by SEUPB PEACE IV called CultureFuse.

The aim of CultureFuse was to make a significant contribution to creating and shaping a shared society where good relations become more embedded, communities are more inclusive and connected, and cultures and traditions are more respected. The programme was intended to build upon existing successful working relationships with different, and new, cultural sectors within Northern Ireland and across the border region. A key outcome of this project was to ensure sustainability of working relationships whilst also building in the cross-border dimension. The programme sought to develop dialogue, shared space and programming between the Irish, Ulster-Scots and Marching Bands identities across the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and immediate North-West border area, and contributes to the consolidation of current work which partner groups deliver on an individual basis.

Key Aims

This project sits within a suite of programmes throughout Northern Ireland, and cross-border regions, which are attempting to deliver impact in relation to shared education, specifically targeting children and young people, supporting and increased shared spaces and building positive relations at a local level, as outlined and supported by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). This project sought to, amongst other things, influence and support SEUPB indicators/outcomes namely:

- An increase in the % of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago, from 45% to 52%.
- The % of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years (from 40% to 48%).
- The % of people who know about the culture of minority ethnic communities from 30% to 38%.

The key outcomes of CultureFuse were to impact upon awareness, collaboration and engagement across community and cultural groups. Specifically this project sought -

- To promote awareness of cultural identity between the Irish-speaking community and those perceived to be non-traditional learners of Irish, particularly those from PUL communities;
- Work collaboratively with groups who identify themselves as single identity particularly PUL communities exploring shared cultural heritage e.g. Language, Music and Heritage; and
- Continued cross-community engagement in the sharing of skills, learning and experience for the building of a shared future inclusive of all communities.

To deliver feedback on the achievement of, and outcomes from, CultureFuse it was necessary to collate feedback from key stakeholders, involved with the project, to confirm impact across communities and cultural identities and identify any conclusions/recommendations to shape future work.

Evaluation Methodology

Participant Questionnaires

A key aspect of this project was the delivery of a number of activities across community backgrounds and cultural identities. The perceptions, views and feedback of participants in these activities was considered critical to inform the evaluation of impact of CultureFuse.

Specifically the evaluation wanted to explore –

- Participant demographics,
- Motivations to engage in the project,
- Impact of participation on perceptions, knowledge and understanding of other cultures,
- Identify what worked well in the project,
- Highlight the challenges in developing cultural knowledge and understanding, and
- Shape any learning for future projects supporting cross-cultural and cross-community engagement.

A questionnaire was developed to collate these opinions anonymously from project participants (See Appendix 1). The survey was self-completion with a view that this can encourage responses and eliminates any issues around ‘herd’ completion and conforming to ‘stereotypical’ responses. In addition, the self-completion can reduce participant concerns when responding to issues perceived to be ‘sensitive’. The survey responses form the primary

focus of this evaluation of CultureFuse. Specifically, 69 respondents completed the evaluation survey.

The activity participants were involved in a number of activities namely -

- *Fleadh{con} Fusion* – this activity involved a series of workshops exploring identity and culture.
- *Foyle Fringe and Tattoo* - The Walled City Tattoo is an annual showcase of traditional Ulster Scots and International music and dance. CultureFuse intended to support the Tattoo to expand cross-cultural performances to include more musicians, particularly from the local Irish traditional sector.
- *Traditions Meet* – This activity enabled individuals and groups to explore aspects of their own and others’ traditions, heritage and culture. This included music, language, history, dance and aspects of culture inclusive of PUL, CNR, Rural, Urban, Irish, Ulster Scots and ethnic communities.
- *Women in Culture* – This activity offered diverse groups of women the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate contributions of women to cultural expression and highlight this to a wider audience using mediums of art, ancestry, language and heritage to enhance understanding and develop capacity.
- *Irish Language Initiatives* - This activity offered the opportunity for audiences to engage with the educational resources and installations, particularly in PUL communities, to enable and support attitudinal change and perceptions towards the Irish language.
- *Dialogue and Discussions* – This activity provided a forum for frank, honest conversations and debate and discussions on all the subjects related to the things that divide different cultures and communities.

- *Mentoring and Advocacy* – St Johnston’s participants were offered sustained engagement with partners across the border with opportunities to support their development, including advocacy and mentoring, to emulate the successes of An Gaeláras and the North West Cultural Partnership.

Steering Committee Interviews

In addition to the participant evaluation, the steering committee’s views were reflected in the final evaluation. This committee provided a key role in developing, delivering, supporting and sustaining the project overall. It included representatives of the Irish Language and cultural organizations, Ulster Scots and PUL cultural organizations, in addition to cross-border representation. To reflect their experiences a number of interviews (2) were held with steering committee members to grasp their perceptions of what worked well and what did not in addition to the challenges presented. These perceptions, along with participants, inform how effective the project was, focusing on the activities, whilst also providing an opportunity to share best practice on what did work well or did not and shape learning for future cross-community and cross-cultural activities, initiatives and programmes.

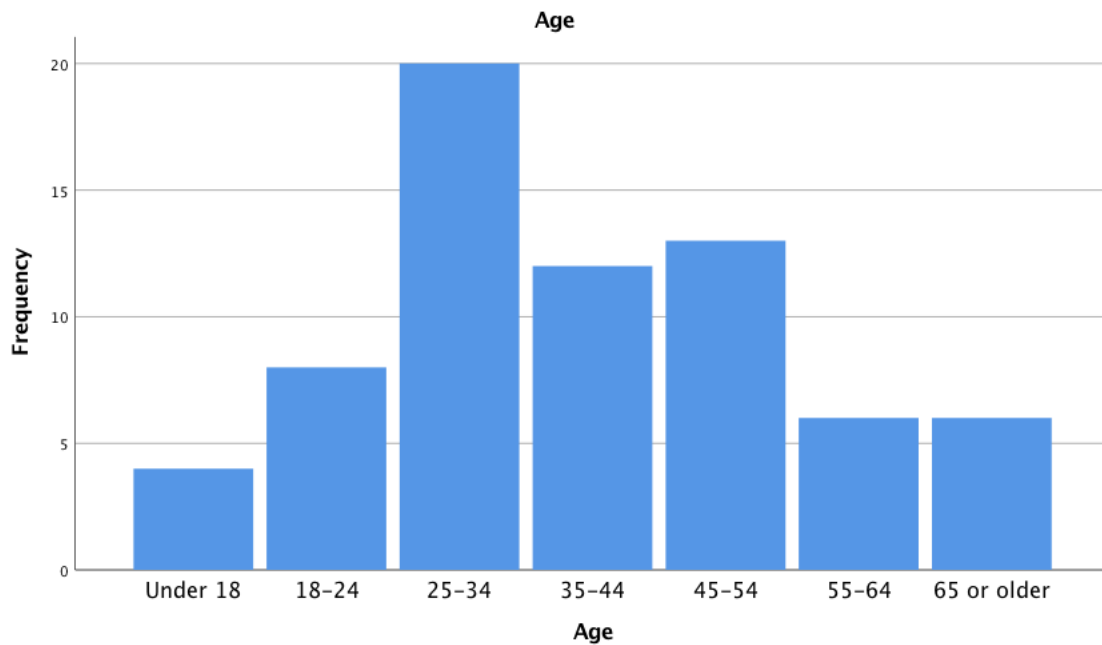
Key Findings and Discussions

Participants Demographics

In terms of demographics the majority of participants were male (n = 41, 59%) with 39% female (n = 27) and one transgender. The majority of participants were aged 25 – 54 (65%) with a smaller number of both younger and older participants respectively (under 18 – n = 4, 6%; 18 – 24 – n = 8, 12%; 55 – 64 – n = 6, 9% and 65 or older – n = 6 9%) as outlined in Figure

I below. Furthermore, 94% of respondents were either single (n = 32) or married/civil partnerships (n = 33).

Figure I Age of Participants



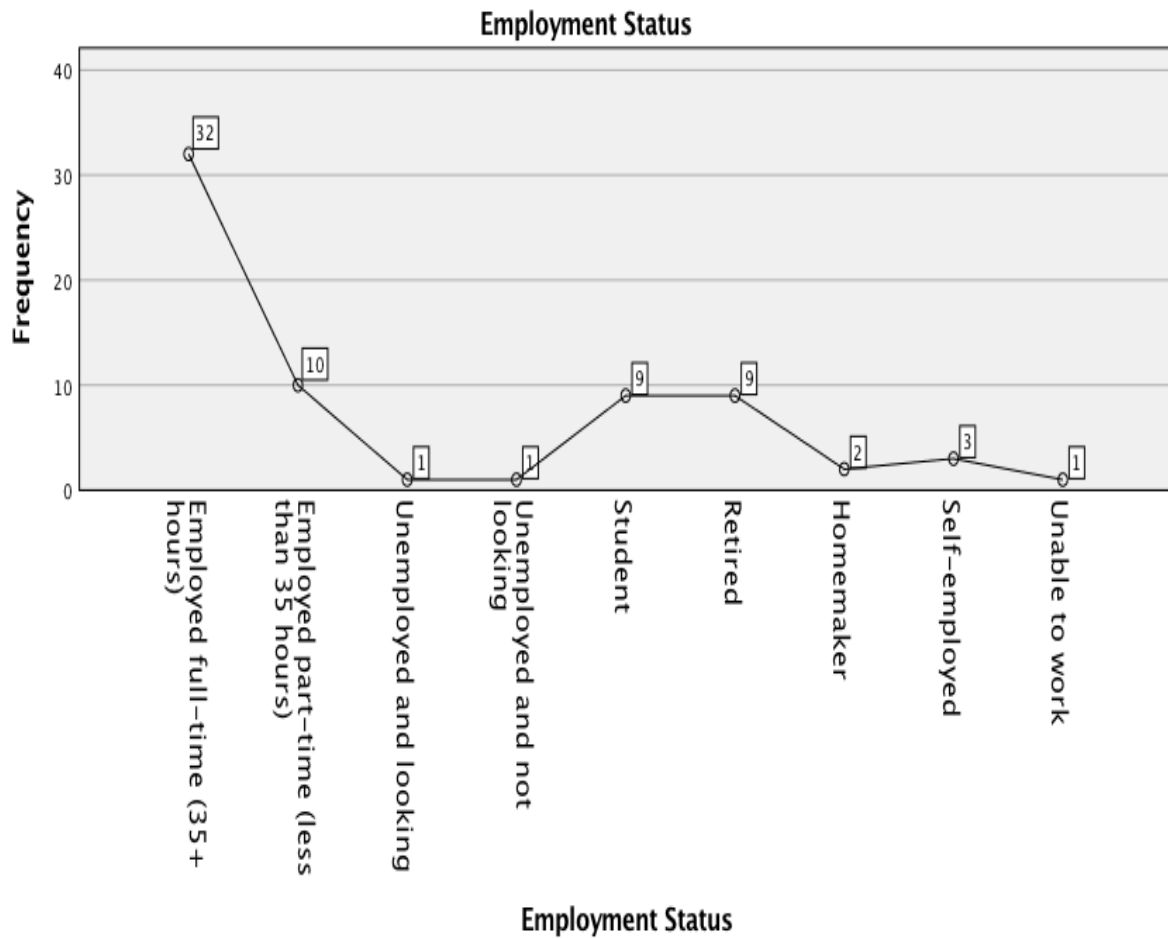
The larger predominance of younger participants may be assumed because young people may be more open to learning about, and or engaging with, opportunities to develop knowledge and awareness of, other cultures, communities and identities. This fits with the overall objectives of CultureFuse to shape and inform across all demographics so breadth of representation is very positive.

Annual Household Income and Employment Status

The majority of participants are categorised as the lower to middle income groupings with 22% earning less than £15,000, 32% earning £20,000 to £34,999 and 19% earning £35,000 to £49,999. This reflects further in the employment status of participants with 46% working full-time and only 15% (n = 10) employed part-time (less than 35 hours). Interestingly, 26% of participants were either students (n = 9) or retired (n = 9) as outlined in Figure II below. In

addition, with regards to dependents, there were no significant trends in data collated with 37 participants (54%) having dependents and 46% with no dependents. Again representation across all demographic groupings is a positive outcome for the project.

Figure II Employment Status of Participants

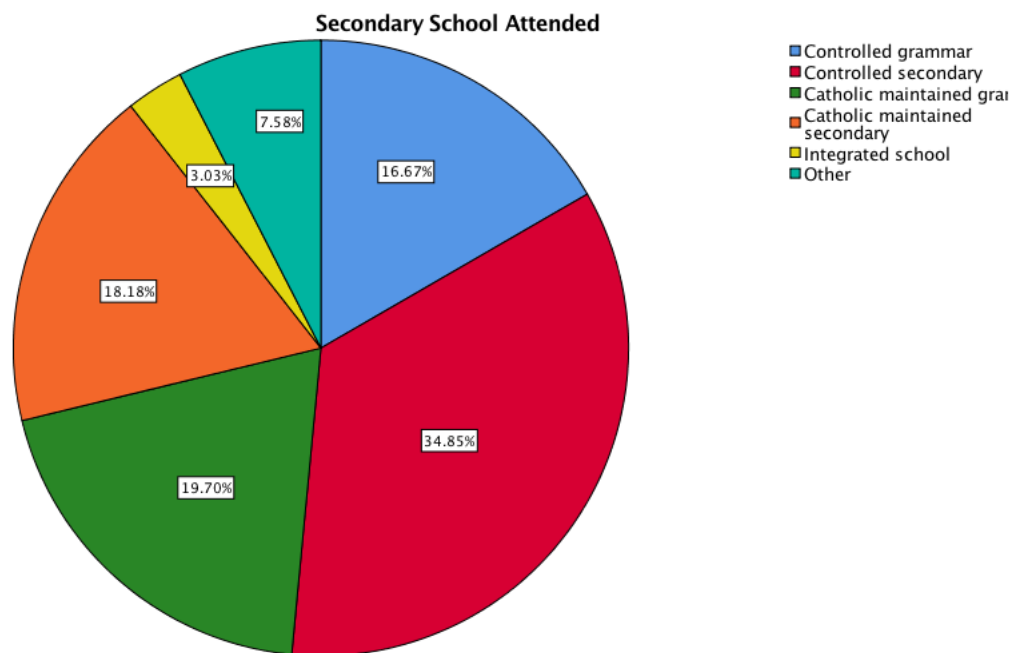


Secondary Education of Participants

The educational background of the participants shows an interesting picture with only 10% (n = 7) completing their education outside a single identity school and 3% (n = 2) attended an integrated school. This may be due to the age profile of participants and lesser availability for integrated offerings or indeed this may also reflect a challenge, and or opportunity, to

develop cross-cultural awareness more formally within the school setting and potentially a need for greater promotion and support for integrated learning opportunities.

Figure III Secondary Education of Participants

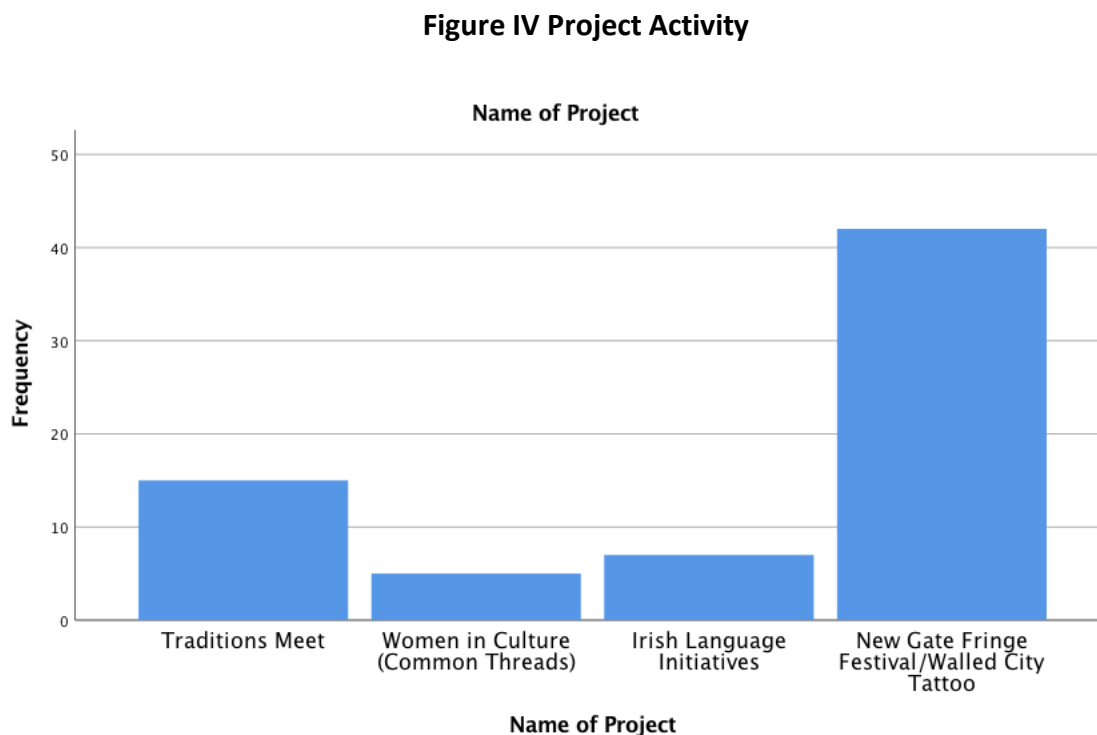


Generally, the overall breakdown demographically shows a spread of participant profiles opting to engage with the activities which meets the needs of the CultureFuse project.

The majority of participants were resident in Northern Ireland with only 2 residing in Donegal. Of the Northern Ireland based participants the majority were from BT47 (n = 25), followed by BT48 (n = 14) and BT82 (n = 11). This shows a breadth of geographical areas represented albeit a large population drawn from Northern Ireland and specific postcodes. The representation of cross-border participants is small in number which may be as a result of promotion of the programme as opposed to opting not to participate.

Project Activity Participation

Overall the participants (n = 69) engaged in 4 key activities as part of CultureFuse as outline in Figure IV below.



The largest number of participants took part in the Walled City Tattoo activity (n = 42, 61%) followed by Traditions Meet (n = 15, 22%), Irish Language Initiatives (n = 7, 10%) and Women in Culture (n = 5, 7%). Most participants completed the activities (n = 65, 94%) with only 4 participants leaving the activity after completing 50% of the engagement (6%). This is a very positive indicator of interest, engagement and satisfaction on the part of participants.

Cross Community Activity Engagement

In order to evaluate the participants engagement it was important to identify how frequently they engage with cross-community projects. This provides a clearer picture on whether the participants were potentially more, or less, receptive to these activities with those engaging more frequently identified as having a higher level of interest in learning and improving their

cultural and community awareness. This presented a nearly even split with 55% having previously engaged in cross community projects (n = 38) and 45% not having been involved (n = 31). What is more interesting is of the 55% who completed previous projects the majority did this infrequently with 29 of the 38 completing these occasionally and rarely (76%). This provides an interesting picture of ongoing engagement and challenges around retaining and building upon interest across different initiatives.

Motivations to Participate

A critical insight was to identify why the participants who did engage in the activities within this programme were motivated to do so. Table I below provides an overview of the motivations in order of preference.

Table I Motivations to Participate

Rank	Motivation to Participate	Frequency (n)
1	Enjoy activities on offer	42
2	Opportunity to work with different people	35
3	Meet different people/residents	32
4	Breakdown barriers between communities	28
4	Better understand community cultures/backgrounds	28
5	Build pride about my own community	23
6	Discuss and confront issues not people	21
7	Do something 'real' about awareness and relations	17
7	Confidence in dealing with other communities	17
8	Give better understanding to children	8
9	Voice in cross-community development	6

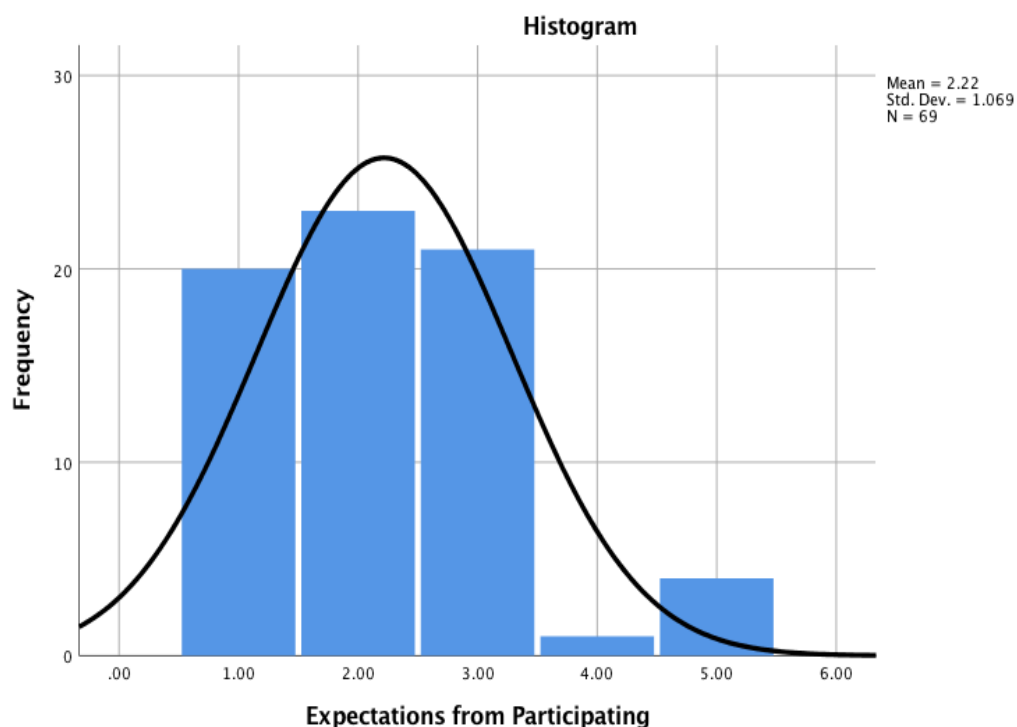
The critical motivating factor was enjoyment – participants are voluntarily giving up their time and they want to ensure that they will enjoy this activity. Interestingly these activities provided an opportunity to engage with others outside a cultural grouping, which may, in fact, not be easily achieved otherwise by individuals and as such presented as a key motivator. Education and awareness were ranked as 3rd and 4th in terms of motivation and the

participants welcomed the opportunity to share learning about their cultural background and celebrate the pride associated with this. As an outcome this is quite interesting because it demonstrates that activities such as the CultureFuse programme presented are critical to facilitate cultural backgrounds to come together, where otherwise this may not be possible. Coupled with this these activities provide, and are welcomed as opportunities for, learning and awareness building. A further influencing factor evaluated in terms of motivation to engage was whether the participant knew someone else completing the activity because this seems to lend some external validation and/or support to encourage engagement. With the current participants 59% (n = 41) knew someone else doing the programme.

Project Engagement Evaluation/Impact

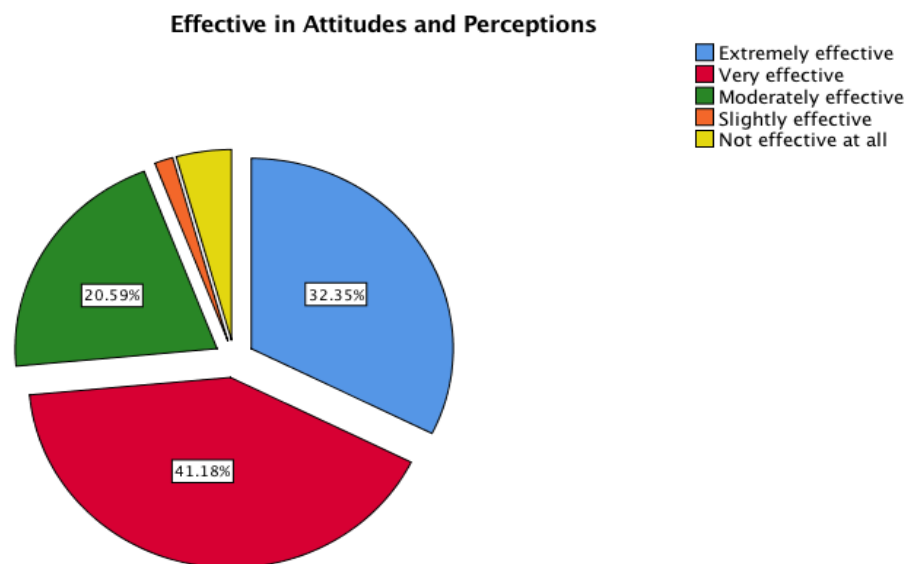
It is important that engagement with the activities at least meet the expectations of participants. Figure V below highlights participants expectations.

Figure V Participant Expectations



On average the programme exceeded expectations (62%, n = 43) whilst 30% of participants felt the programme met what their expectations were prior to commencing (n = 21). This is a very positive outcome. This is further supported by the overwhelming response that engagement with the project was a positive experience (93%, n = 65). A further corroboration of positive impact and achievement of programme goals relates to the effectiveness of the programme in influencing attitudes and perceptions. As outlined in Figure VI only 6% (n = 4) considered the programme less than effective or not effective at all at impacting upon perceptions and attitudes of other cultural identities and communities.

Figure VI Effectiveness of Programme in Influencing Attitudes and Perceptions



In fact, Respondent 1 stated that *'the programme was very effective – I met people and engaged with people I'd never had the opportunity to meet and learnt about different culture and arts'*. Furthermore, Respondent 14 stated that *'my view is more positive now'* while Respondent 16 concluded that they *'understand their background more'* with Respondent 26 arguing that *'I got to experience the other communities I am not a part of. I was able to talk*

to people whom I would not normally get the opportunity to talk to'. These statements clearly depict how the CultureFuse programme enabled engagements across community groups, identities and backgrounds which typically would not have happened naturally.

A further criteria for evaluation of the impact of this project was in terms of sustainability which was measured by a number of metrics including the formation of friendships from different communities. This is a significant development for different cultural backgrounds, where there is limited integration with, to consider forming friendships. As a result of engagement with the activities in the current programme it is noted that 64% (n = 44) have created new friendships with a further 28% (n = 19) indicating this is a possibility in the future – delays in friendship formation can be due to establishing trust further and indeed gauging reaction from other friendship groupings. Interestingly only 5 participants indicated they would not create new friendships (7%). Friendships provide sustainability in cross-community developments and cross-cultural engagement, beyond activities and interventions, creating their own momentum for change and such an outcome is particularly welcomed. This was further explored to identify how these new friendships would be developed and sustained. Table II below highlights the main methods.

Table II Friendships and Interactions

Rank	Engagement	Frequency (n)
1	Connect on Facebook	31
2	Socialising	24
3	Phone or text	16
4	Have them visit your home	6
5	Visit their home	5
6	Whatsapp group	1

Interestingly, Facebook provided the most popular choice for engagement which can be considered a further positive impact of this project. Facebook can allow public communication through the social platform with your 'friends' and this can be known to other

‘friends’ or, alternatively, this can be set to private viewing. As such it is difficult to explore this further. What is very positive however from this project is the high number, namely 72%, who will use very personalised approaches to engage with new friends made namely socialising, phone or text and visiting (n = 52). This shows a step beyond simply understanding cultural identity and background and a move towards building trusted networks and circles of intimacy.

Effectiveness of Tools and Methodologies

Supporting and developing cross-cultural and community awareness and understanding is a complex phenomenon and there is no single methodology or tool that will address all issues. As such, within the CultureFuse project, a number of activities relied on various methods including music, language and heritage to facilitate learning and shared understanding. Table III below highlights the effectiveness of these.

Table III Effectiveness of Methods

Rank	Method	Effective	Ineffective	No Effect
1	Music	95%	1%	4%
2	Dance	90%	0%	10%
3	History	88%	8%	4%
4	Heritage	84%	6%	10%
5	Ancestry	82%	6%	12%
6	Art	81%	9%	10%
7	Language	76%	8%	16%

Rating these interventions, based on impact, by participants it is clear that music, dance and history are the most effective with language having the lowest level of effectiveness in delivering impact and also one of the highest levels of perceived ineffectiveness (8%) and no effect (16%). Sharing music and dance seem to provide entertainment value, as previously discussed, and also enable learning and awareness creation thereby creating a positive

impact. This was captured very clearly by Respondent 24 who concluded that *'music can break down barriers to bring people together when words fail music speaks'*. Language is a traditional method used through many interventions and the key therefore is how this is presented along with other methodologies to enhance impact and effectiveness. There is a need to explore this further as additional exploration and discussion of this is beyond the scope of this report.

Following on from this it was important to identify from participants what worked well and what did not work well in the activities and project overall. This information was collated using open ended responses to encourage as much personalised feedback as possible and to ensure that the evaluation did not force respondents to select from a narrow list of options. The participants were very open and honest with feedback – in fact, 171 responses were provided for what worked well and 58 responses for what did not work well (See Appendix 3 for details).

Table IV What Worked Well and What Didn't Work Well

Category	Key Themes
Worked Well	Organisation of sessions
	Content of sessions
	Music
	Dance
	Drama
	Art learning
	Socialising
	Meeting new people/traditions
	Mix of participants
Didn't Work Well	Time to prepare/Organisation and scheduling
	Too much emphasis on learning – need more socializing
	Imbalance of cultural backgrounds

The positive feedback received on the programme has been reflected throughout the evaluation received from participants and the project organisers are to be commended on how well they have developed the programme, focused the content, facilitated social engagement among participants and used varied content to allow cross-community and cross-cultural awareness to develop – both formally and informally, directly and indirectly. This is best practice that should be shared with future project organisers in similar areas. In addition, there is learning on how to improve future programmes by broadening the participant group, through wider marketing and targeting, and increasing opportunities for social engagement. On balance this is a very positive outcome for the CultureFuse project.

Complexities of Cultural Identity

This project recognised the complexities and challenges in capturing information around cultural background and identity. As a means of ensuring that **ALL** cultural identities were reflected participants were permitted to use open ended responses. This was previously recognised by the Droichead team as an alternative to traditional closed responses because it was recognised that traditional categories do not capture the complexities of cultural identity and either exclude people or force a choice of ‘other’. The use of open ended responses to cultural identity has been routinely, and successfully, used by the Lead Partner in monitoring and evaluation tools for many years which validated further this approach.

To this end **18** identities were concluded. Some of the identities were traditional as in Protestant, Catholic and Mixed whilst others were more specific and detailed showing identity and cultural background as something which cannot be captured by categories. Table V below reflects the complexity of the cultural and community identity.

Table V Cultural and Community Identity

Cultural Identity/Community Background	Frequency
Catholic	15
Protestant	14
Unionist	6
Unionist/Protestant	5
Irish/Catholic	5
Irish	3
Irish Republican	2
African Irish Catholic	1
American	1
Catholic but not outwardly republican	1
Irish Republican but accepting of the rich cultural diversity on our island	1
British	1
100% Irish – I am deeply involved in Irish culture	1
Diverse	1
Mixed parents, religiously Protestant, though brought up in a Catholic community	1
British Unionist	1
Unionist/Loyalist	1
No religion	1

This table shows the multi-cultural nature of society generally, in the first instance, with non-traditional cultures such as African and American identified. In addition, it shows how traditional identity categories would not capture the richness of identity in Northern Ireland. Although the more traditional identities of Catholic and Protestant feature most frequently (n = 15 and n = 14 respectively) the remainder of respondents (n = 31) may not have been able to identify their true identity if this had been provided as a choice of options which is a key learning for future projects in this area. In fact the researcher is confident that the use of open ended responses positively influenced respondents to answer this sensitive question honestly and provide a clearer understanding of how identity is perceived by individuals in Northern Ireland.

Supporting Integration in Neighbourhoods, School and Work

A critical measure of success for this programme was the impact that the activities would have on participants everyday support for more inclusive and integrated communities. Across **three** key areas of education, home and work the activities increased the level of support among participants specifically –

- 74% increased support for mixed religion neighbourhoods
- 68% increased support for mixed religion/integrated schools
- 74% increased support for mixed religion workplaces

In each case there was only a 3% decrease (n = 2) in support for these types integration which can be taken as an overwhelming success.

Improving Knowledge and Respect

It is acknowledged that lack of engagement with, or resistance to other cultures, is often based on lack of knowledge which is the driver for programmes such as CultureFuse to deliver a difference. A key measurement therefore of success for this programme of activity was to review how engagement with this project enhanced knowledge of, and respect for, other cultures and identities.

Figure VII Impact on Knowledge

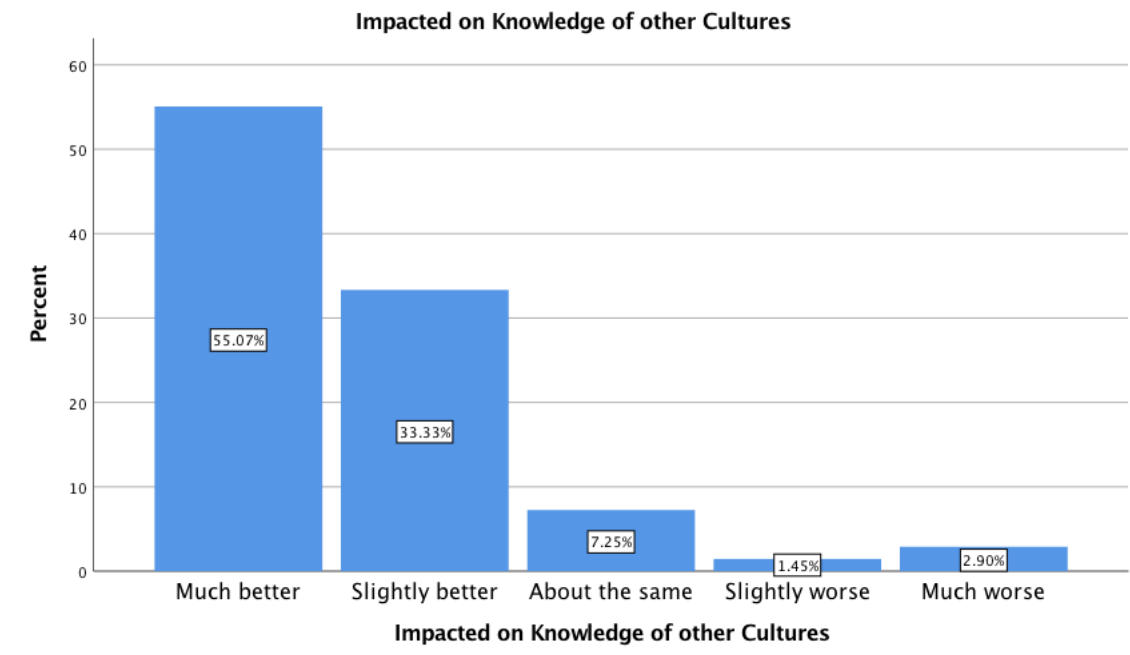
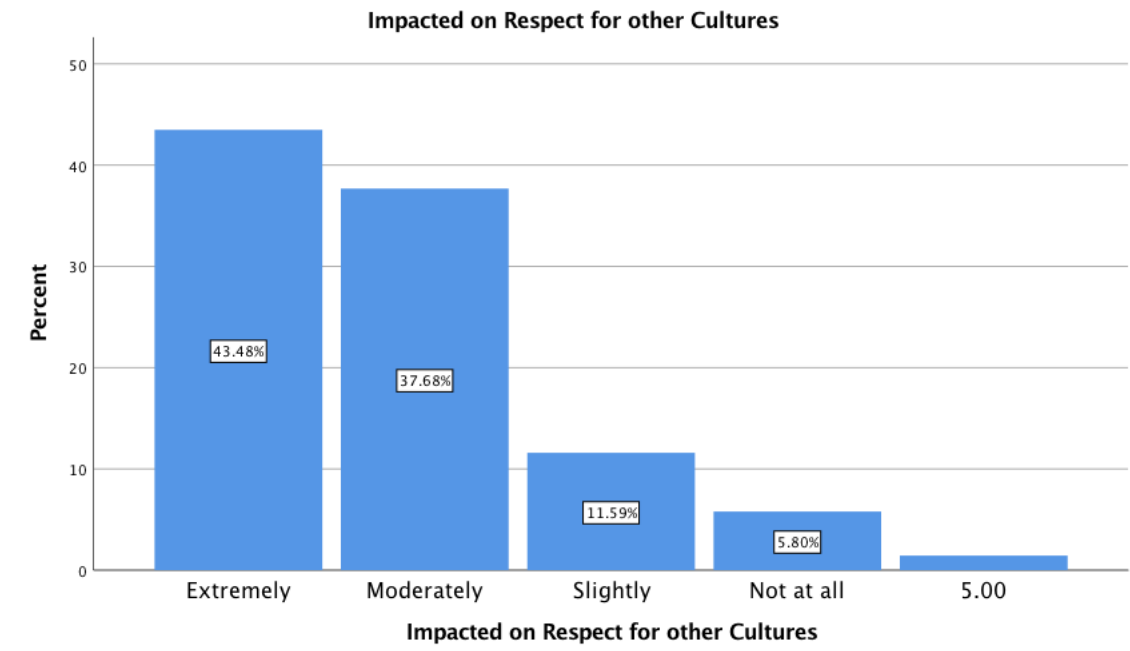


Figure VIII Impact on Respect



The conclusion drawn is that the programme positively impacted upon both knowledge and respect. Interestingly, 88% (n = 61) felt the programme has improved their knowledge about

different cultures and only 4% (n = 3) felt it was negatively impacted. Furthermore, 94% (n = 64) indicated a positive impact upon respect for another culture. An additional positive outcome is the breadth of impact of the activities and project. The participant is not the only person impacted albeit this is the main stakeholder experiencing direct impact (n = 48, 70%). Table VI highlights below where the impact of the project will be, both directly and indirectly, beyond the 69 participants.

Table VI Direct and Indirect Impact of Participation

Type	Impact	Frequency (n)
Direct	You (Participant)	48 (70%)
Indirect	Family	39 (57%)
	Community	26 (38%)
	Friends	23 (33%)
	Workmates	7 (10%)
	Schoolmates	3 (4%)

The low numbers of impact on schoolmates is likely to be reflective of the small number of participants in this programme who were involved in formal education. Otherwise the findings are very broad. The key outcome from this finding is the very significant impact on the social and personal circles of participants. CultureFuse, as a project, can celebrate directly impacting upon 69 individuals but indirect impact could be in treble figures if each participant were only to indirect influence 3 others (n = 207). Although it is beyond the remit of this report the author would suggest that it would be ideal to follow up, at a later point in time, with participants to reflect further on this direct and indirect impact.

These outcomes further support how the programme of activities impacted upon SEUPB targets regarding relations and cross-community engagements both now and in the future. In fact what compounds this outcome further is that engagement with activities through this project has increased confidence in 74% (n = 51) of participants to challenge

racism and sectarianism going forward. This is a profound outcome and another critical impact to be celebrated by the CultureFuse team.

Effectiveness of Cross Community Projects

A critical metric to measure is the perceptions around community projects and their impact on cultural and community relations. CultureFuse participants concluded overwhelmingly that they agree that projects, similar to the one discussed in this report, directly impact community relations with 86% (n = 59) agreeing or strongly disagreeing and only 3% (n = 2) indicating disagreement. In addition, there is a very positive perception around financial commitment to projects for community relations with 72 (n = 50) confirming that the money spent on cross community projects is appropriate. This further supports the need and desire for future projects in this area to positively influence different communities, identities and backgrounds.

Challenges to Cross Community Project Engagement

Developing and enhancing community relations is critical whilst being particularly challenging and complex as often there can be a variety of pressures working against cultures and individuals to discourage/disengage/divide community engagement. Table VII below outlines the top ranked challenges as identified through the current project.

Table VII Challenges to Engage in Cross-Cultural and Community Projects

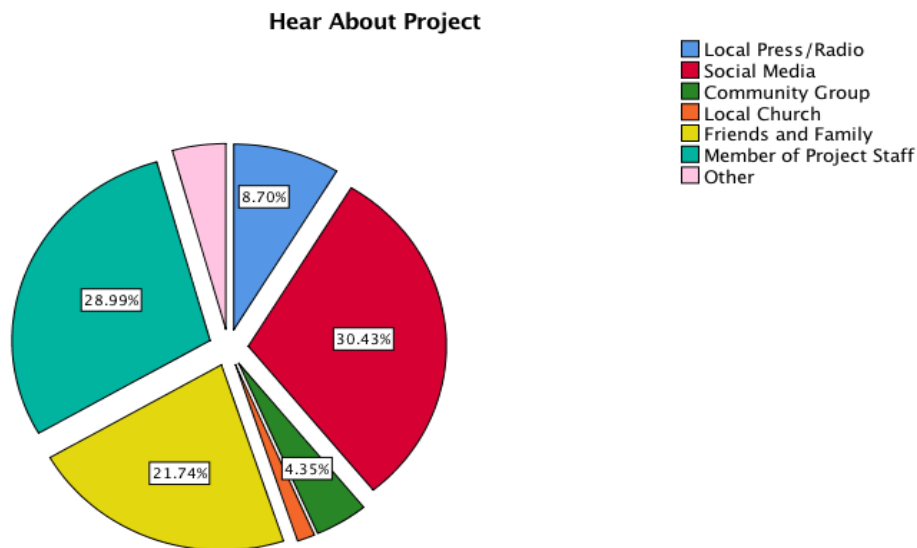
Rank	Challenges to Participation	Frequency % (n)
1	Threat of ridicule by community members	58% (n = 40)
2	Locations of projects reduces appeal/'puts you off' attending	54% (n = 37)
3	Not everyone has the time and inclination to attend these projects	35% (n = 24)
4	Transport issues to and from	22% (n = 15)
5	Childcare needs/issues	19% (n = 13)
6	The types of projects are not appealing	17% (n = 12)
7	Cross-community projects are a waste of time	6% (n = 4)
8	They have no impact on cross-community relations	4% (n = 3)

Interestingly, participants acknowledged that cross-community projects are an effective way to spend their time with 94% (n = 65) confirming they are a good use of time along with 83% (n = 57) concluding their appeal and desire to participate. The key challenges to participation in the project were identified as ridicule from community members which is beyond the control of the participants and programme developers – this is a very real issue across cross-cultural and community interventions generally and offering reassurances to participants and/or, potentially, anonymity may reduce the impact of this ridicule. Interestingly the issues around location, appeal of the project and transport and childcare issues can be considered when planning interventions and activities and can be addressed.

How to Communicate and Promote

There are many ways to promote programmes to potential participants. Promotion is critical to ensure that the message is received by the right target participants and the opportunity to engage is enabled to ensure a broad mix of participants and identities/backgrounds are involved in the project. Figure IX highlights the key sources of information about the project.

Figure IX Promotional Activities



The most effective promotional efforts are concluded as social media (30%, n = 21), project staff (29%, n = 20) and friends and family (22%, n = 15). Friends and family is an interesting source of information as this can directly minimise the effect of ridicule from the community which previously presented as a challenge. In addition, project staff can alleviate concerns and become ‘personal sellers/advocates’ of sorts where issues around engagement can be addressed and messages modified to address concerns on a one-to-one basis.

Steering Committee Feedback

The interviews from the steering committee, as expected, provided a more strategic discussion of the project than the individualised feedback provided by participants. The interviewees confirmed the strength of CultureFuse was the established structures, trust and networks that the project capitalised upon and the project enabled continued dialogue in a

more formalised and impactful way. The interview respondents identified a number of areas that worked well namely –

- The steering group bridged contentious issues due to the foundation of trust.
- The programme involved a breadth of cultural partners which was a positive input.
- The staff management of the programme was excellent.
- The project delivered very positive impact and targets quite quickly.

On the other hand the interviewees did allude to concerns around how some steering group members did not fully engage and how funding, to sustain the life of CultureFuse after the current programme ended, was not explored and sourced.

The interviewees responses were very insightful in terms of project impact with 7 key impacts delivered as below –

- Showcases what can be done through relationships and trust and further cements existing relationships and trust,
- Highlights progressiveness of the city,
- Eliminates illusion of a city divided,
- Cross-cultural relationships have been nurtured,
- Promotes inclusive expression,
- Allows conversations on issues dividing communities, and
- Respect has now been developed among funders, communities and government bodies.

These findings, along with the evaluations by the participants, lend further support to the impact of CultureFuse beyond participants within the activities which is critical to positively

influencing, on an ongoing basis, cultural and community awareness, learning and respect. The key recommendations would be that there is an opportunity to support and develop more mediators and moderators of the media influence on community relations, similar to the role developed and played by the lead partner, and possibly include more communities in future project, potentially including media representation, to broaden influence and impact and lessen negative press engagement.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The CultureFuse project and activities have resulted in raising awareness and knowledge across communities, identities and communities. The collective feedback from the participants and steering committee members demonstrates the wide ranging influence of the project which reaches beyond meeting rooms and community and city boundaries. What is often not acknowledged is activities such as those offered by CultureFuse, and other providers, may be the only opportunity some cultural backgrounds have to come together – the lack of engagement with, and awareness of, other backgrounds and communities is in fact being compounded by lack of opportunity, and not attributable to a lack of desire to understand.

The activities provided by CultureFuse exceeded expectations and were overwhelmingly classified as a positive experience, with high levels of effectiveness concluded in impacting upon attitudes and perceptions, which is a further endorsement of the effectiveness of the activities and their objectives to influence awareness and learning across cultures, communities and borders. In fact the high completion rates of activities are very clear indicator of satisfaction in participation which is to be commended and the CultureFuse model of development, content and engagement should be shared as an example of good

practice. In addition, the positive impact of the project on community relations, as acknowledged by participants, further endorses the important role of CultureFuse in supporting and helping sustain better awareness, understanding and engagements across cultures and communities. In fact, the project should be acknowledged for its significant catalytic impact beyond participants to other significant community members including families, schools, workplaces and communities. This is a significant outcome that should not be underestimated and one that CultureFuse should be celebrated for delivering both direct and indirect impact on cross-cultural and cross-community knowledge, learning and awareness in a 'ripple-effect'. Based on this outcome the recommendation would be that future projects developed to influence and impact cross-cultural and cross-community awareness and knowledge should be evaluated at two-points in time - end of participation and a later future date - to measure and gauge this indirect impact on wider personal and social circles. Indeed, as the findings from the interviews show, the indirect impact of the success of CultureFuse is felt even further in terms of wider stakeholder groups including funders, media and government bodies.

The breadth of demographic profiles reflected in this project shows wide appeal for cross-cultural and cross-community education and awareness raising opportunities. Some key recommendations are proposed -

- Younger participants are the largest demographic group and these could be key facilitators of change within cultural groupings generally and as such they should be targeted using promotion for future cross-community and cross-cultural activities/initiatives to generate awareness and interest in what appears to be a natural target audience.

- To target the youngest demographic groupings there is a recommendation, based on evidence, to formally engage with young people in their education settings specifically within controlled and catholic maintained schools to increase impact on cross-cultural learning. As lead partner, An Gaeláras, and others, are experienced in this type of in-situ intervention and it should be supported to continue, and increase. The wider agenda of 'Shared Education' is central to meeting this engagement challenge and the overwhelming evidence of increased support for integrated education from this programme further lends credence to this critical channel for interventions and change agent development.
- The use of an open ended cultural identity/community background question should be a feature of similar projects going forward and the researcher would conclude that the traditional cultural identity categories are no longer fit for purpose and could, in fact, lead to question bias and non-response.

The challenge in relation to maintaining interest and building engagement to participate in additional cross-community activities more frequently is a complex phenomenon and would require further investigation. It could however be suggested that the lower rates of ongoing engagement/frequency with similar projects in the past may be related to the quality of interventions for participants, the entertainment value and the types of tools/methods used. Indeed the positive use of music, art and drama used within the current programme may be key to attracting repeat attenders on future programmes and a key learning to be shared among programme developers.

Future events should, in the first instance, look at the entertainment/enjoyment value for participants because this was the key motivator in engagement and could potentially impact

upon greater numbers engaging in cross-community/cultural initiatives and interventions. In particular, it is clear that music and dance are powerful methods for awareness development and cross-community knowledge creation. Furthermore, the promotional efforts around future interventions should 'frame' the benefits of the programmes more clearly to justify committing time and resources, by the participants, and to reflect the operational challenges by using locations, both geographically and in terms of building facilities, to ensure challenges such as transport and childcare are easily accessible and available. In fact, it might be pertinent to facilitate sustained engagement that project organisers provide services such as childcare and transport to enable participation.

In relation to marketing the key is to use social media for promotion of cross-community programmes along with engaging project staff as ambassadors and personal sellers to support and encourage engagement. In addition, future efforts to support and deliver development of cross-cultural and cross-community programmes should attempt to develop promotional campaigns which are likely to attract a broader geographical spread of participants to include a greater number of cross-border participants (where relevant). This can only help to support greater peer to peer learning and wider dissemination of knowledge across communities in terms of impact both directly and indirectly. A final set of recommendations for future project offerings should capitalise on the best practice from CultureFuse of activities namely –

- Use of varied tools to deliver learning specifically music, drama, dance and art
- Provide opportunities for socialising among participants
- Ensure breadth of cultural identities to include those from traditional and non-traditional backgrounds

Sustainability in programmes of change and inclusion is critical. The sustainability of the impact of this project is reflected in the number of friendships formed, the enhanced levels

of knowledge and respect for other cultures and the impact on participants willingness to question and challenge racism and sectarianism. Indeed, the learnings and ongoing awareness, trust and relationship building will be sustained, by the participants, through their planned connections with friends formed through the activities which is a very significant outcome – the concerns raised through the interviews of sustainability may in fact be alleviated in some way as the legacy of programmes, such as CultureFuse, mean all stakeholders, including participants, steering committee members and project staff, have a role to play in the future sustainability of initiatives. To facilitate this it is recommended that the steering committee organise opportunities in the future for these stakeholders to come together again, including participants, in an informal setting to enable this ongoing sustainability and link. In addition, the perceptions around financial commitments to impact positive community relations and cross-community respect are acknowledged and supported. In fact, this may be the opportunity for the steering group to identify additional funding opportunities to support further roll-out of the CultureFuse project.

To conclude, the learning, programme structure, model and steering committee are to be commended and celebrated. The legacy of CultureFuse can be enhanced through best practice learning to develop future projects to continue to deliver ongoing and sustainable interventions and activities to support and positively impact cross-culture and cross-community relations and engagement. Indeed, by developing roles, such as mediating, and including broader community representation on steering committees and in activities this will serve to improve the CultureFuse model further. This is not, however, an easy achievement, as one interviewee summarised this situation, but it is a worthwhile effort where trust, relationship building and commitment can deliver exceptional and impactful results –

“The CultureFuse relationship can be copied but not fully replicated”.

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Programme Participation Evaluation

We are keen to establish the effectiveness of our cross-community interventions and, based on your experiences as a participant, what worked well and what didn't. We would therefore value your contribution by completing this questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers – just your opinion which matters. All response are confidential and anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

1. Please select below the name of the project you have recently taken part in:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Fleadh [con] Fusion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| New Gate Fringe Festival / Walled City Tattoo | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Traditions Meet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Women in Culture (Common Threads) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Irish Language Initiatives | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dialogue and Discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mentoring and Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. How much of this project did you complete:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 100% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 75% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Less than 25% | <input type="checkbox"/> |

When answering this questionnaire please consider your answers based on your experiences in the project above.

3. Are you:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transgender | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. What age are you?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 45-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 55-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 65 or older | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Please select your marital status:

- Single
- Married/Civil Partnership
- Living with Partner
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed

6. What is your postcode? _____

7. What is your total annual household income?

- Less than £20,000
- £20,000 to £34,999
- £35,000 to £49,999
- £50,000 to £74,999
- £75,000 to £99,999
- Over £100,000
- Don't know

8. How would you describe your cultural identity/community background?

9. What is your current employment status?

- Employed full time (35 or more hours per week)
- Employed part time (up to 35 hours per week)
- Unemployed and currently looking for work
- Unemployed and not currently looking for work
- Student
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Self-employed
- Unable to work

10. Please identify the secondary school that you currently attend or attended:

- Controlled grammar
- Controlled secondary
- Catholic maintained grammar
- Catholic maintained secondary
- Integrated school
- Other (for example, outside of Northern Ireland)

11. Do you have any dependents?

- Yes
- No

12. Have you participated in cross-community projects before in the past 5 years?

Yes*

No

* If yes, how often

Very frequently

Frequently

Occasionally

Rarely

Very rarely

Never

13. What were the reasons or motivations for you to take part in the project initially (**Select ALL that apply**)?

Develop opportunities to work with people from different backgrounds

Meet with different residents/new people

To help break down barriers between communities

To discuss and confront issues not people

To better understand other community backgrounds/cultures

To do something 'real' about cross-community awareness and relations

Make me more confident when dealing with members of other communities

To give a better understanding to my children about other communities

To build pride about my own community

I wanted a voice locally in cross-community developments

I enjoy the activities on offer

14. Did you know anyone on this project before you took part?

Yes

No

15. Were your expectations met by taking part in this project?

Far exceeds expectations

Exceeds expectations

Equals expectations

Short of expectations

Far short of expectations

16. How would you classify your overall engagement with this project?

Positive

Negative

17. How effective was this project in allowing you to consider your attitudes and perceptions toward people from different community backgrounds?

Extremely effective*

Very effective*

Moderately effective*

- Slightly effective*
- Not effective at all*

*Please provide details on why you feel this way: _____

18. How has involvement in this project affected your support for the following:
(Please select a response for each option)

Integration Option	Increased	Decreased	No change
Mixed religion neighbourhoods	_____	_____	_____
Integrated/Mixed religion schools	_____	_____	_____
Mixed religion workplaces	_____	_____	_____

19. Have you made any new friends from different community backgrounds through this project?

- Yes*
- No
- Possibly

* If yes are you likely to do any of the following? **(Please tick ALL that apply)**

- Socialising
- Visit their home
- Have them visit your home
- Phone or text
- Connect on Facebook
- Other (Please specify) _____

20. Please identify the effectiveness of each of the following ways of building cross-community and cross-cultural understanding?

Method	Very Effective	Effective	No Effect	Ineffective	Very Ineffective
Music					
Language					
History					
Dance					
Art					
Ancestry					
Heritage					

21. Who will your involvement in this project impact upon (**Tick ALL that apply**):

- You
- Your family
- Your friends
- Your workmates
- Your schoolmates
- Your community

22. How has participating in this project had an impact on your knowledge of other cultures beyond your own culture?

- Much better
- Slightly better
- About the same
- Slightly worse
- Much worse

23. As a result of taking part in this project how has this impacted on your respect for other cultures/traditions?

- Extremely
- Moderately
- Slightly
- Not at all

24. Did taking part in this project change how comfortable you would be challenging racism and sectarianism in others?

- Increased
- Decreased
- No change

25. For this project please identify up to **3** things you think really worked well and 3 things you feel did not:

Worked well

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Didn't work well

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

26. Please indicate if you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements:

‘Cross community projects are essential for improving community relations’

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

‘Too much money is spent on cross community projects’

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

27. What do you see are the challenges to engaging people in cross-community projects?

(Please select ALL that apply)

- Threat of ridicule by community members
- Locations of projects reduces appeal/’puts you off’ attending
- Cross-community projects are a waste of time
- The types of projects are not appealing
- Transport issues to and from
- Childcare needs/issues
- Not everyone has the time and inclination to attend these projects
- They have no impact on cross-community relations
- Other (Please specify) _____

28. How did you hear about the project?

- Local press/radio
- Social media e.g. Facebook or Twitter
- Community group
- Local church
- School
- Friends and family
- Member of Project staff
- Other (Please specify) _____

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. Your responses are confidential and very important to the research team in making future cross-community projects more effective.

Appendix 2 – Interview Protocol

Interview responses anonymous

1. What were your expectations of the outcome/impact of the CultureFuse project?
2. What do you think worked well about the CultureFuse project?
3. What do you think did not work well about the CultureFuse project?
4. What are your concerns/challenges/shortcomings about the CultureFuse project?

Appendix 3 Opened Ended Anonymised Responses

Worked Well

- Facilitators were good and led the session well (1, 24)
- The music was engaging and fun (1,28,34)
- The educational aspects were intriguing (1)
- Learning new art techniques (2)
- Working with other women to learn/complete the banners (2)
- Getting to learn and meet other cultural traditions (3,37,52)
- Working with other cultural traditions (3,31,32,40,44,54,56,59)
- Helping to explain/understand other cultural traditions (3)
- Discussing history from multiple perspectives (4)
- Knowledge of other cultures (4)
- Much more likely to change sectarianism with people (4)
- Community centres to visit which opened up my views on culture and dance (5)
- Art classes were brilliant. The women were fantastic (5)
- Varied mediums of art used which was nice (6,33)
- I met some nice new people – good social (6)
- I learned about Unionist community in Bready (6)
- Learning Irish in a mixed religion group (7)
- Socialising in a mixed religion group/different backgrounds (7,13,26)
- Staying overnight in Ghaeltacht with a mixed religion group/people from different traditions (7,13)
- Companionship (8)
- Teaching methods were excellent (8,12)
- Comfort (8)
- Class participation (10)
- Class content (10)
- Confidential (10)
- Residential trip was great (12)
- Venue was neutral (12)
- Learning Irish in a native Irish environment (13)
- Everyone equal chances (14)
- Learning more about different cultures (16,50)
- Did mix of music from both cultures (14)
- Encouraged to work together (14)
- Understand other cultures more than before I took part in this project (16)
- Respect for other cultures more (16)
- People coming together with common interest (18)
- Enjoyed performing (18)
- Enjoyed meeting new people (18)
- Everyone getting along (19)
- Doing different types of music together (19,63)
- Coming up with new ideas (20)
- Talking to people (20)
- Learning about different instruments (20)
- Meeting new people (21,30,41,44,46,53)

- Meeting once a month (22)
- Financial allowance for travel/fund (22)
- The project leaders organised things well (22)
- Mixing of Irish and Ulster Scots musical traditions (23)
- Mixing of African musical tradition with indigenous (to Ireland) music (23)
- Music and challenge of playing different music i.e traditions (24)
- Great mix of people young and old on course united really well (24, 25)
- The relaxed attitude (25)
- Confidence and support given (25)
- The workshops (26)
- The acceptance and integration of different traditions (26)
- Good outcome of concert (27)
- Music is good for the soul (27,31,61,)
- Dance (28,30,31,34,36,49,61,64,65,69)
- Drama (28,30,36,49,61,64,65,)
- Music and dance joined everyone (29,41,55)
- History celebrated (29,30,31,49,51,56)
- Culture celebrated (29,38,55,60)
- Variety of acts (32,33,34,37,60,69)
- Music (33,36,48,51,56,57,64,68,69)
- Cross community dancers were exceptional (38,39,48)
- Entertaining (38,43,)
- Variety of music (39,42,45)
- History of bands (55)
- Great finale (39,48,)
- Cross community aspect (42,43,45,46)
- The storytelling in the Tattoo (51)
- Music and dance choices (43,46,52,63)
- Learning new music (44)
- Great opportunity (45)
- The chance to meet and perform with another community (47)
- Show the best of our culture in a positive way (47)
- Good musical performance (50)
- Highland and Irish dancers (50)
- New cultural opportunities (51,66)
- Making new friends (52,57,66,)
- Arts and music has helped relations (53)
- To show what our musical heritage is (54)
- Integrated dance performances highlights the cultural value of all (58)
- Music and history were interesting (58)
- Music and bands (59)
- Irish and highland dancers (59)
- Acts were well organised to showcase everyone (60)
- Good cross/mix of community (62)
- Playing together with other traditions (65)
- Playing music (66)
- Variety of participants (68)

- Cultural exchange (68)

Didn't Work Well

- The spaces/gaps between rehearsals/meetings were too wide (1,14,18,24,25)
- There was no cultural information passed i.e. no conversation about cultures (1)
- Learned so many different art techniques but did not have back up material to take home and practice between workshops (2)
- Not enough time to chat with participants (3)
- Too much emphasis on completing a piece of work rather than on socialising (3)
- Lack of equipment/facilitates and necessary materials meant delays in getting work done (3)
- Create final piece earlier (4)
- There wasn't balanced numbers (5)
- Different cultures not just catholic and protestant (5)
- Time management/allocation issues added pressure near end (6)
- More cultures – Africa, world religions (6)
- Travel was not easy for me as I don't drive (6)
- Nothing (7,12,26,38,58)
- Everything was perfect! (13)
- GAA shirts being worn by other participants was intimidating (14)
- Timekeeping (14)
- Hard to mix with people when I first started the project (16)
- Big commitment (18)
- People showing up to practise (19, 21)
- Putting different types of music together (20, 21)
- Composer-led approach – not a lot of music composing done by the participants (23)
- Would have worked in shorter time period – not six months (24)
- More information on the different communities (27)
- More cross-community (30,41,42,46,49,50,51,54,61)
- More time to practice (30,31)
- More time playing together (33,53)
- Could have been more collaboration between the communities (40)
- Bigger finale with all the cast (42)
- More musical performances (43)
- More integrated performances (44,57)
- Bands could play with the dancers (44)
- Could have been more inclusive (45)
- More Irish dancers (49)
- More Catholic representatives (50)
- More time for each act (59)
- More of a cultural exchange – bands playing each others music together (62)