

Home-Name- Дом-Дом

Be creative! Будь креативным! Bądź kreatywny!
Būk kūribingas! Esi radošs!

Evaluation Report

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The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: **Europe investing in rural areas**



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Executive Summary

This is an evaluation report of the Home Hame Дом Дом project. Home Hame Дом Дом is the name given to a project that was commissioned with LEADER funding by the North Aberdeenshire Local Action group called, 'Provision of Social Integration Solutions for Migrant Workers.'

Aims

The aim of the project was to facilitate deeper engagement of Eastern European migrant communities in their chosen area of settlement and encourage meaningful integration with the indigenous populations of the identified areas.

The following outcomes were established during the course of the project.

- To build a sense of community between newcomers to Aberdeenshire and those who have lived here for a long time.
- To create opportunities for people to get to know each other to break down social barriers and forge new links.
- Other potential benefits include improved language skills, greater understanding of shared culture, increased community capacity, increased confidence among participants, and stronger social networks.

Scope

The project was very wide ranging, offering 50 courses across 4 towns in the North East of Scotland

There were 114 discrete activities, including workshops, regular classes, online events, presentations, information stalls, offered in association with 28 project partners.

There was a total of 1,017 participants. Many people attended multiple events, totalling 1515 engagements. Over 500 of these are from Modo events, so large numbers of young people and families from very international backgrounds participated.

There were 285 Facebook followers and Facebook posts reached over 3000 people.

We engaged with Eastern European migrant communities through:

- The consultation survey at the start (59 out of 148 respondents spoke languages other than English at home).
- We worked with key partner organisations including ALNES (Association of Lithuanians in North East Scotland), East European Association Banff, and Polish Association Aberdeen, to develop courses and activities to meet the identified needs of the East European communities.
- Of the total 30 sessional tutors/group leaders, 10 were from East European communities.
- Narrative Inquiry interviewees: 8 out of 31 interviewees spoke languages other than English at home.
- Gathered evaluation feedback from a representative cross section of our participants through the end questionnaire.

Quality

The quality of the project was considered to be high by participants, as evidenced in section 9 of this report. Enjoyment was high, creativity was high and learning/empowerment was apparent. The aim of integration was met according to the definition provided above. People from different cultures came together and learnt together. They sat side by side in a creative atmosphere. People felt more connected and learning about integration took place.

Impact/Significance

Themes emerging from the evaluation data showed impact in terms of:

- Connections;
- A ripple effect;
- Serendipity;
- Wider, softer, impacts;
- Feelings;
- Language;
- Capacity Building/skills;
- Empowerment/confidence building;
- Integration;
- Cultural understanding;
- Sustainability.

Conclusion

It is a credit to the partners that so much activity took place and resulted in so much learning about integration in such a compressed timescale. At the time of implementation, the project sometimes felt complex, but reflection has revealed that the management of complexity led to a very good outcome in terms of the action research and the compressed community development frameworks used. More time would have enabled better shared understanding of the project's aims and outcomes between partners.

If the timescale had been longer, more engaged, in-depth work could have been done, however the friendships, relationships and working partnerships that were developed over the past 18 months will be used to shape any future integration work undertaken by the Elphinstone Institute. Home-Hame-Дом-Dom was shaped by learning from the previous Ssamis project, and future work will be informed by the legacies of both Ssamis and Home-Hame-Дом-Dom.

The learning that has been taken from this project may be transferable, is significant and will apply to other projects with a similar aim.

A. Firstly, that the language of integration needs to be in people's own language, rather than trying to achieve this in a second language. Translating the project documentation into the main community languages attracted a wider range of participants. Including Polish and Doric classes in our programme created opportunities for multidirectional language sharing; and challenges the hegemonic idea of English being the only important language for integration.

B. Secondly, images are really important part of making learning accessible to people whose first language is not English. Photographs and videos of activities and events were shared on the Home Hame Дом Dom Facebook page as a significant part of our engagement strategy. The pictures tell the story of the project.

C. Thirdly, the focus on doing was absolutely appropriate for learning and integration to both take place. The 'knowing by doing' approach worked well, bringing people together to undertake an activity, that was not directly language or integration focused.

D. Fourthly the creative dimension is crucial to the initial and continuing engagement of participants in an integration and learning process. It takes the mind away from what might otherwise be threatening or embarrassing.

E. Use of technology assisted with the engagement of populations as they joked, laughed, translated using apps and generally problem solved and learned together.

F. There was learning not to 'parachute in' activities that worked in other areas and not to assume you know what will work in an area. The consultation needs analysis threw up surprises.

G. Migrants might consider they want to learn grammar as a means of learning language with formal classes, but this was not within the scope of this project. A more naturalistic, informal method still gives plenty of opportunity for language learning.

H. The emotional vision, energy and passion invested in this project were crucial to its reach, in ensuring events happened and people were able to engage.

I. Spaces matter. The theme of the project was 'home' and it became apparent that white, soulless community centres did not attract migrants to participate. More informal and pleasant spaces were required for people to feel welcome and safe. There is a need to use venues that have meaning for participants and the need to create a sense of 'place' for participants.

J. Fostering cultural democracy was important, valuing all forms and expressions of culture equally. Bringing cultural and community leaders into a network and working with them to facilitate their ideas was important.

K. Valuing the vernacular culture was important to not patronise or devalue cultural and creative preferences.

L. Making management/arrangement systems as non-hierarchical as possible, privileging process over product of the arts activities and ensuring there is co-creation of artefacts.

M. Paying attention to the atmosphere of activities. Checking the feeling of an event and being open to change where things do not work and this is linked to creating a sense of place as in I.

N. An unexpected outcome from this project was that other groups who are not necessarily the focus of integration policy, but who were at risk of social exclusion, especially during lockdown, such as older women and people who live alone, reported great benefits from being part of this project in terms of making new social connections, overcoming the digital divide, and increasing confidence.

1. Introduction

This is an evaluation report of the Home Hame Дом Dom project. Home Hame Дом Dom is the name given to a project that was commissioned with LEADER funding by the North Aberdeenshire Local Action group called, 'Provision of Social Integration Solutions for Migrant Workers.'

The North Aberdeenshire Local Action Group identified a need in the Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Banff and Macduff and Turriff areas to engage with Eastern European migrant communities and facilitate their integration with indigenous populations. Social isolation and loneliness were identified as a considerable issue for parents and older migrants.

The focus of the work would be using culture and creativity to break social barriers and create a feeling of community belonging.

This work builds on community initiatives and partnerships that developed during an earlier ESCR funded research project SSAMIS (Social Support and Migration in Scotland) which explored experiences of migration and settlement among Central and Eastern European migrants living in urban and rural Scotland.



International folk dance taster workshop



Publicity materials were translated to ensure equality of access to information

2. Partnership

The project was led by the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen. Partners in the project included:

- Workers Educational Association (Scotland);
- Modo – Circus with Purpose;

A number of operational project partners emerged during implementation of the project, including, for example, the East European Association in Banff and Artventure in Peterhead.

The project was managed by a Project Board which included representatives from:

- LEADER
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Workers Educational Association (Scotland)
- Modo – Circus with Purpose
- University of Glasgow

3. Aim

The aim of the project was to facilitate deeper engagement of Eastern European migrant communities in their chosen area of settlement and encourage meaningful integration with the indigenous populations of the identified areas.

The following outcomes were established during the course of the project.

- To build a sense of community between newcomers to Aberdeenshire and those who have lived here for a long time.
- To create opportunities for people to get to know each other to break down social barriers and forge new links.
- Other potential benefits include improved language skills, greater understanding of shared culture, increased community capacity, increased confidence among participants, and stronger social networks.

4. Methodology

The evaluation was undertaken by Professor McArdle in association with Claire Needler and Simon Gall from the Elphinstone Institute. This report is a mixed methods product of evaluation, according to the ideas of:

- quality;
- impact;
- scope;
- and significance.

Interviews were conducted and analysed by all three members of the evaluation team but interpretation and writing of this report lay with Professor McArdle and is considered to be her independent view of the project, Home Name Дом Дом. Thanks are due to all the partners and participants who gave their time, knowledge and accounts of experience to this evaluation.

The methodology for the evaluation used mixed methods. Evaluations had been done of many of the individual activities during the course of the overall project and a summative survey was carried out, consulting participants about their experience of the project. The survey attracted a response from participants, as below:

- 38 respondents in total
- 23 of whom spoke English/Scots as first language
- 15 of whom a language other than English/Scots as a first language
- 81+ friendships/links made. This is only indicative, because in many cases these might be double counted if two people have listed each other. So, they are better thought of as links. It is also likely to be much higher as some people, when asked how many friends they've made through the project, gave answers such as, "loads."

The qualitative data used narrative inquiry. This is a method that involves naturalistic conversations and story-telling. Its key advantage for evaluation is that it does not frame the ideas that respondents discuss; it allows them to decide what is important and relevant.

It generally begins with one question to begin a story, then a series of prompts to ensure this continues and develops to the end. It is also a highly accessible approach for participants, following a natural conversation style in which participants speak for much longer than is usual with more structured interviews. Narrative inquiry is generally very good at exploring past, present and future; what life was like before an intervention, the present experience of a project and the 'becoming' or what this means for the future. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and who others are, as they interpret their past. Story is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful (Clandinin, 2013).

Narrative inquiry interviews are generally viewed as case studies and, accordingly, smaller samples are usual than is required for other forms of qualitative interviewing. We had a very robust sample of 31 respondents, which included 19 narrative interviews and 2 focus groups. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Partner representatives were also interviewed using narrative inquiry.

Confidentiality for respondents is quite difficult for narrative inquiry, in that the detail provided is often indicative of the individual's identity. No respondents expressed any disquiet about this and, indeed, found the process affirming and cathartic in expressing their views about the project and its impact for them. Wherever possible, the identity of individuals has been hidden in this report.



Polish-Scottish singing group performing at Smak dzieciństwa Taste of Home in Peterhead

Professor McArdle also acted as Participant Observer at one event of the project; Polish-Scottish Singing Group on 3/12/2020.

5. Activities

Before the project activity began, needs and desires were identified through a multilingual Consultation Survey which received a very strong and robust response of 148 people:

MULTILINGUAL CONSULTATION SURVEY

Total respondents: **148**

Number who speak English, Scots or Doric as the language of home: **89**

Number who speak language other than English at home: **59**

Number of respondents under 18: **27**

Number of respondents over 18: **91**

Number of respondents over 65: **9**

Preferences for activities were sought and were reported as below:

- 3 most popular activities among English and Doric speakers: Photography; Sewing; Traditional Music and Song
- 3 most popular activities among those who do not have English as first language: Photography; Dance; English Classes
- 3 most popular activities among Eastern European respondents: Photography; Dance; English Classes
- 3 most popular activities among under 18s: Rock, Pop, Indie; Dance; Film-making

Lessons were learned from the consultation, as below.

- As had been anticipated, reaching people in Banff/Macduff and Turriff had been a challenge. Partly, this was because pre-existing networks and relationships with people or organisations from migrant communities in these towns were lacking. So, it took longer to get started, and also partly because the numbers of East European migrants were fewer in these towns.
- Encounter in Peterhead may not be a suitable venue as it is difficult to find. (Encounter now closed)
- English and Scots speaker have different preferences to those who do not speak English as a first language.
- In most areas, non-English speakers have requested English classes. This was mostly delivered through Language Cafes but also built into other sessions as per our taster with K. and L. from WEA.
- Translation budget needed to be higher.
- Need for care relying on volunteers providing translations because good translations were vital for disseminating project information. We didn't want to exhaust good will by repeatedly asking our participants for translation help. Translation is a skilled job, so should be paid accordingly. Also, it is more equitable and ethical, in keeping with the values underpinning this whole project.
- There was a need for representatives from each community on the Project Board to help effectively reach all groups and areas.

The activity of the project was both comprehensive and wide ranging. A total of 113 discrete activities were implemented (Exemplars of activities are included as Appendix A), which fell into 23 categories, as devised by the Project Co-ordinators. These were:

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Taster activities
Presentations
Attendance at open days
Textile Art
WEA Creative Cafes
Smiddy silversmith Carve workshops
Songwriting group
Wool Engineering Experience
Taste of Home Burns Night
Taste of Home Polish Night Smak dzieciństwa
Taste of Home Lunch Club Smak dzieciństwa
Strictly in the Broch
Taste of home Lithuanian night
WEA Creative ESOL Café Banff
Photography group
Polish for beginners
Make a film on your mobile
Harp group
Modo Research with young people (postcards)
Polish-Scottish singing group
Doric for Beginners
Doric Improvisation
Fundraising Workshop
Celebration Week
Modo films



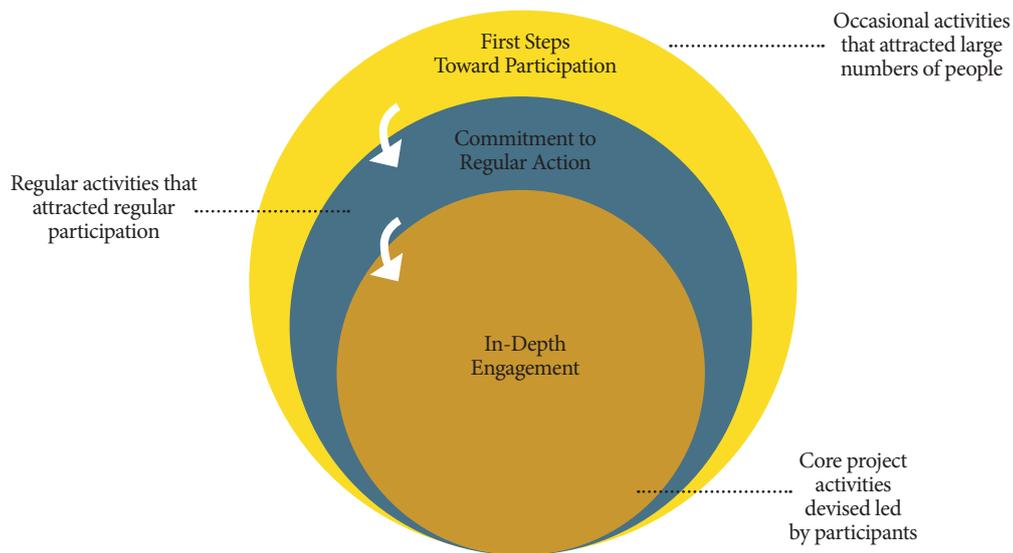
Participant doing crochet at Wool Engineering Experience

It was clear that the activities were focussed on three approaches to meeting the aim of the project. These may be viewed as concentric circles of engagement. The first approach was the provision of first steps movements towards participation. This allowed individuals to participate in a safe and open environment. These activities attracted large numbers and were commonly organised around the theme of food, which celebrated both cultural and social dimensions of sharing.

The second approach was to attract participants to frequent and regular meetings with a cultural and learning dimension. Participants showed a commitment to regular interaction, social and cultural exploration, and learning a skill or craft.

The third approach was the in-depth engagement of participants in the project through their participation as tutors, facilitators and ambassadors for the project with other people; these were people who felt comfortable in the first two approaches.

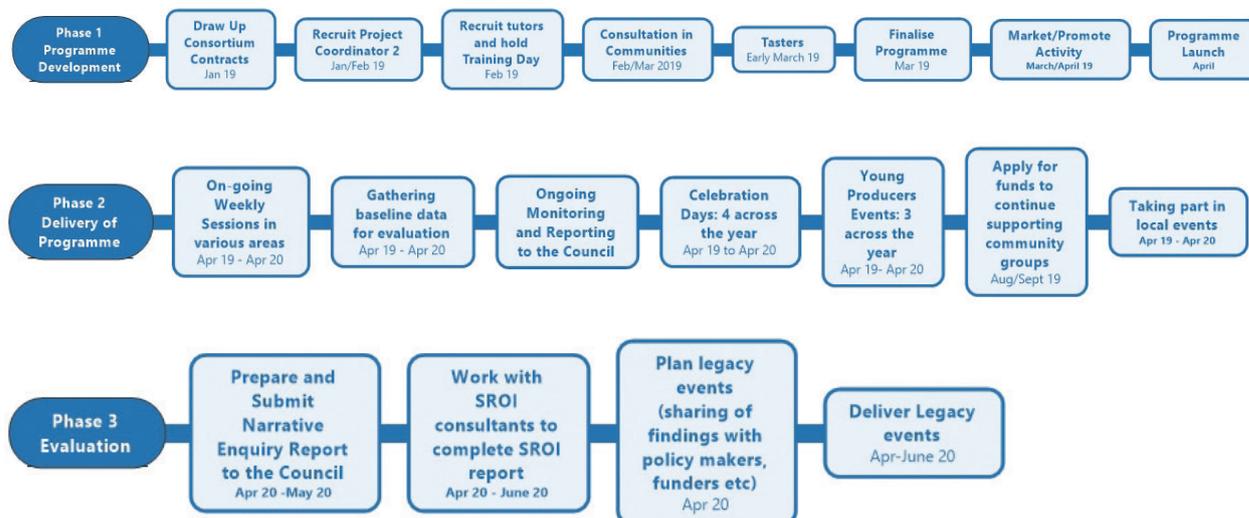
3 Project Approaches



Characteristically, there was movement between the three approaches towards closer engagement, as people became more familiar with the modus operandi and aim of the project. For example, tutors emerged from the role of participant in a class, developing the confidence and commitment to offer their own programme of learning, congruent with the aims of the project.

6. Chronology and Timeline

The following timeline was devised in the early stages of the project.



In community development project of this kind, a more spiralling and cyclical approach may have been a more accurate representation of the likely progress of the activities and this is discussed further in Section 7. It is the view of the evaluator that a project of this kind would have been more appropriate over a three-year timescale and it is a credit to the partners that so much has been achieved in a short lead time. The linear approach outlined above was, however, achieved in broad brush. Following COVID-19, the project was granted an extension until December 2020.

7. Key ideas underpinning the project

As the ideas underpinning the project are complex, it is appropriate here to describe the approach taken by the Project Co-ordinators and their partners.

Integration is a complex idea and is sometimes criticised for seeking to integrate people from one culture into a more dominant culture. The literature focuses predominantly on integration of migrants into the workforce or labour market. Less is written about social integration which was the purpose of this project. The term 'multiculturalism' is equally problematical as it is argued it has become a term allowing people to be managed and reified, rather than the original sense of celebrating difference (Kundnani, 2002); it is argued it became an ideology of preserving the status quo rather than moving forward to better equality and integration. The dictionary definition is helpful here - a joining or merging of different parts or qualities in which the component elements are individually distinct. This definition preserves the equality of the elements – the traditional population and the migrant population; and the quality of distinctiveness of cultures.

The project was conceptualised exploring the term 'home'. It was part of the purpose of the project to explore this concept with the people engaged in the project as participants, and this is discussed later, but 'Home' may be defined simply as a place where people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness. (Creswell, 2015). Creswell cites Seaman (1979) in describing it as, 'an intimate place of rest, where a person can withdraw from the shuttle of outside and have some control over what happens within a limited space' (p.39). More simply, home is where you can be yourself.

'Belonging' is another key concept underpinning this project. Skillman (2020) suggests that many have argued that a sense of belonging is at the core of self-esteem. In 'Belonging: A Culture of Place' bell hooks interprets belonging as 'a place where the soul can rest' (hooks, 2009). If our work reinforces a sense of place, security, identity, and tradition, then fostering a sense of belonging is at the core of what folklorists do (Skillman, 2020).



Community Arts projects seek to encourage people to get together in creative endeavour to (inter alia) enhance individuals' and communities' sense of wellbeing. Research shows that the physical act of participating in the creating and making of art and engagement within cultural activities improves wellbeing and reduces stress (Devlin, 2010). Often the environment created by the communal act of creating and experiencing creativity assists in shaping an environment where people can form friendships and acquire new skills. It also is:

- "an effective route for personal growth leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments that improve people's social contacts and employability.
- It can contribute to social cohesion by developing networks and understanding, and building local capacity for organisation and self-determination.
- It represents an effective, responsive and cost-effective element of a community development strategy." (Derived from Matarasso, 1997:68)

The project has been from the outset largely exploratory and it has become apparent to the external evaluator, that the process has been akin to an action research process, that sought to explore the use and impact of a creativity-based approach to integration of communities – the traditional community in a number geographical locations in the North East of Scotland and more recent incoming communities of migrants. Action research focuses on practice in order to improve practice and it is participatory in nature, involving a community of learners and a community of practice as well as a geographical community (Craig, 2009).

Action research seeks improvement and change and is generally cyclical. A number of cycles of inquiry take place each using and improving on reflections and learning from previous cycles; this is a process that also characterises community development approaches. Processes are notoriously tricky because they involve people in real life settings where variables cannot be managed and exploration is holistic. This was apparent in Home Hame Дом Dom, where a large number of cycles of inquiry took place to explore and refine methods of work with communities with complex shared characteristics and differences.

Principles that underpin action research are outlined below and these apply to the finding out process of the project.

- Action research integrates 'finding out' and action;
- It involves the collaboration of participants and those seeking to find out;
- It seeks knowledge that is unique to each context with all its complexity;
- It begins with a goal of transformation and social justice for all;
- It involves a high level of reflexivity;
- It derives 'knowing' from a wide range of fields such as philosophy, anthropology, psychology, ethnography and social science;
- It engenders powerful learning for participants;
- It locates the inquiry in an understanding of broad political and ideological context.

(Derived from Somekh, 2006)

Characteristic of action research is the conducting of a number of cycles of inquiry in which action is taken, reflected on, then renewed action takes place based on the learning from previous cycles. These cycles are linked and form a spiral of progression towards a project's aims, rather than a linear approach. The activities outlined above were cycles of inquiry exploring the best means of seeking integration, according to the specific requirements in each area.

A theoretical framework for the project that was followed is a robust community development approach, with all its pitfalls and complexity; its challenges and opportunities.

Community development has many definitions but the principles that underpin this work may be described as:

- "a commitment to facilitating change in the community;
- a concern for all members of a community or a community population;
- a commitment to community empowerment, participation and democracy;
- a commitment to equality of opportunity;
- an awareness of the intersubjectivity and interrelatedness of community influences."

(McArdle et al, 2020, p. 14)

All the points above were consistent with the overall aim of the project. For this evaluation, the final bullet point is most significant as it refers to the complexity or 'muddle' of community influences that have been brought to bear on this project, including from the fields of social geography; arts and culture; economics; and, of course, public health and well-being with Coronavirus, to name but a few. The beginning of the process of community development lies in listening, valuing and understanding people's particular experiences. Community development is a mutual process. It begins in everyday lives, understanding histories, culture and values and listening to hopes and concerns (Ledwith, 2005). This is what the project has achieved, as will become clear in our discussion of the findings of the evaluation.



It is quite clear that change or impact was sought through the project. Change may be thought of as making a difference, contributing to innovation, or modification of the existing state. Change may be cumulative and short, medium or long term and permanent, temporary, or reversible (McArdle et al, 2020). In this report, we are concerned with describing the scale, quality, and significance of impact. Scale refers to the number of people who have been involved. Quality refers to the nature and strength of impact and significance is important but harder to pin down and refers to why it matters.

8. The Elphinstone Approach

As lead partner in Home Name Дом Дом, the Elphinstone Institute's approach to working is important to an understanding of the project. The Elphinstone Institute is a centre for the study of Ethnology, Folklore, and Ethnomusicology at the University of Aberdeen. The Institute researches and promotes the culture of the North and North-East of Scotland, using ethnographic methodologies, staff, research fellows, and students research ideas of identity and belonging, meaning and function, drawing on an exceptional heritage of traditional music, song, story, lore and language, alongside the dynamic creativity of those who live and work there today. The work is focused on living vernacular culture and the ways in which individuals give expression to contemporary issues of community and identity in both public and private life. The Institute is interested in the dynamics of how traditions and cultures are created, adapted, reinterpreted and renewed, to meet new and challenging circumstances. The interests of the Elphinstone Institute are international as well as local, since the great diaspora of northern Scots stretches around the world, and because many immigrants have chosen Scotland as home.

A key part of the Institute's remit is public engagement, co-producing knowledge and research in partnership with local organisations and individuals. These co-operative ventures can take the form of joint research projects and community initiatives, public events such as festivals, displays, and conferences, and participative workshops, all of which enrich the Institute's work and increase public understanding of the importance of vernacular culture in society today.

Ethnographical study provides the backbone to Elphinstone projects. Ethnography, simply put, explores cultural phenomena from the point of view of the subject of the study. Critical ethnography is an approach that, furthermore, explicitly sets out to critique hegemony, oppression, and asymmetrical power relations in order to foster social change. All forms of critical ethnography work to interrogate the structures of power and lay bare inequities suffered by marginalized communities (Palmer, 2015).



Lithuanian cold beetroot soup



Dorota the chef serving Polish Military soup Grochówka in Peterhead

This critique of hegemony and asymmetrical power underpinned the activities of Home Hame Дом Дом, from the definition of integration adopted with its critique of integration INTO a culture, to the valuing of informal culture. Learning by doing was an underpinning feature of the approach, helping, over a number of weeks, to build small cohesive groups. The groups of diverse individuals came together through workshops or classes to learn informally, gradually getting to know one another and establishing vernacular group culture. In keeping with the Elphinstone Institute's approach to valuing, developing, and analysing vernacular culture, language, story, food and skills were important dimensions of the project. Language themes were very present in the activities; people's stories formed the implicit backdrop to the cultural explorations of participants. Food was an important social mediator in activities and learning of skills was key to the explicit life of the project.

9. Findings

Data from the narrative inquiry was thematically analysed and the discourses noted. Key themes emerged from our narrative inquiry, which illuminated the quality and significance of the project, as well as its complexity. The themes were:

- Connections;
- A ripple effect;
- Serendipity;
- Wider, softer, impacts;
- Feelings;
- Language;
- Capacity Building/skills;
- Empowerment/confidence building;
- Integration;
- Cultural understanding;
- Sustainability.

9.1 Connections

Movement characterised the work of Home Hame Дом Дом; connections, a ripple effect and serendipity. It became clear in our narrative enquiries that connections were very important to people in the early part of the project but became even more important as isolation increased during the lockdown associated with COVID-19. Social connections were important in terms of friendships created, as well as physical connections with art and craft materials and the co-constructed social dimensions of working creatively together. The survey showed over 90% of people made new social connections.

“To involve people together, I really loved it and it’s just what we need to do it because we are living here from different countries.”

“Claire found a very, very lovely lady who showed us how to crochet and was showing us how to do different things and we just chatted away.”

I just thoroughly enjoyed that night learning about the Fat Thursday and eating that lovely soup.

“How people have, people still ask me ‘when did you last go home?’ meaning when have you last been to Bosnia. I say well actually I’m home here. I’ve lived longer here than I have ever lived anywhere else. What is it that makes home? It’s your family and community connections.”

“I think that’s been really nice, the fact that M’s sister joined us, and then L came along and then R, her pal came along the next wik. I think that obviously says something’s going right.”

“But much of it has been born out of creating the (class) and realising that people would turn up over and over again. And while their motives were different from mine, It’s all kind of netted together, which is really interesting. . . ”



Carve silver ring making workshop at the Smiddy in Banff

9.2 The Ripple Effect

Connections create connections, create connections. The impact of the project was seen in a ripple effect, where one activity triggered an impact in the wider community and so on, just like a pebble in water. It is impossible to gauge the number of people indirectly affected by the Home Name Дом Dom project but we were able to characterise some of these ripples through our narrative inquiry.

"Yeah, but that disnae matter because it's been brilliant. It's been absolutely fantastic. I feel like I've got a little wee faimly spread aa ower the world, and you know, ye've got yer great untie, doon in Edinburgh, who will remain nameless, who aabidy smiles and nods and says 'yes, yes' and you've got your wee, shy lassies that keep comin along and ye think gosh, isn't that braa?"

"And it became clear from discussion with M that this was kind of, this was a result from the research she had done or had been part of in the past... and the programme kind of provided additional activities to what they had done for participants in Peterhead."

"My dad was a music teacher but we, I mean I had played recorders, the descant and the treble and my 2 older kids also played that. It was like every time it can round to festival time it was always this 'yellow bird,' and I hadn't told my older son and it got on my nerves so much that he couldn't do this still and I said, 'look I'll show you how do it,' so I showed him how to do it and at the school they were like, 'who showed you how to do that?' And the next thing I knew I was along at the school helping them."

"Um it started when I came here to English sessions. I just learnt English language, and then after few years, they offered me, just to do some, just help with application forms and then it was just they offered me to do just part time job with the different cultures to involve them together."

9.3 Serendipity

Serendipity is the aptitude for making desirable discoveries by accident, good fortune and luck. The skill lies in seeing and taking these opportunities for one's own objectives and this was apparent in the project.

"Then we started haein a blether one Friday fly time one of Tom's cafes and you and X and I started haein a blether and we got to talking about Doric, and some of your Lithuanian (I think) ladies had been speaking about doing Doric classes and actually we'd had a wee chat via emails . . . so that sowed the seed of why don't we look at doing a Doric class online. And we did (laughs)"

"We never know what is happening here in our life. But I am a person who would really, would like to feel when people are coming together from different cultures. Yes, I love them, because there is no borders and no barriers, we're just people and it is lovely to meet those people who think the same as you, (laughs). Because I understood them when I worked with them, with the association here in Fraserburgh.

They set up like a Fridays, Polish Fridays in community centre, which was still down on Bridge St., and we could come there with whatever problem we've got. And initially there were Scottish CDL (sic) workers there, and they were helping us but then they wanted us to become independent. So, they helped us to get a group together and make it happen."

9.4 Wider, softer, impacts;

Impact is discussed in this report in Section 11. Wider softer impacts were apparent in the data from the survey, including friendships and professional contacts. The examples below illuminate these more qualitative impacts. These are closely linked to 9.5. Feelings.

". . . so this is a group, a sort of offshoot, that have all stuck together, and we've got a WhatsApp group, and now that lockdown is coming out, we're going to go out and have a meal because we always have so much to say to one another."

"So, one of the ladies, M, had gone off on holiday and her husband was made redundant, so he was really down in the dumps, so she brought him back a piece of cherry wood because he likes working with his hands. And without even asking her, or speaking about it, he disappeared into his workshop, with her harp... and he produced his sort of prototype from this... So it has really given him an interest and a sense of purpose really."

"But, and you know, there was a little old lady came and she used to be really lonely and she 'I just love this' she said, 'I just come along and you're all so welcoming. I get a cup of tea and I'm doing things."

"I don't actually think they (Syrian new Scots) come for the English skills. They're coming and they are not forced to come. They're coming because they want to, and sometimes they'll show you their phones if there's been a party or something, so they are telling you about what's going on in in their lives."

9.5 Feelings

Feelings were very widely expressed in the narrative inquiry almost exclusively positive. The examples below provide a flavour of this.

"I think it was well organised. First of all I think, really, really one of the most successful events I ever had (Peterhead event)."

"We had a lot of people. Maybe not so many Scottish but a lot of Lithuanians definitely. And just in general I think that's a really, really good project . . . but that one time was really, really enjoyable time. Even if I didn't understand half of what was said but 'aye, aye, good, good aye aye.'"

"Well, hey. We'll just, I think it's gone weel. I'm chuffed. . . Fair Trickit!"

"To involve people together, I really loved it, and it's what we need, to do it. Because we are, are living here from different countries. Yes, it's not easy because people are shy to get around sometimes."

"Only we did dance a little bit. But it's really good. You can feel people, you can feel"

"I think we enjoyed it. I mean I actually enjoyed the most, needlefelting. It was something I really liked. I'm not that creative so I don't know actually what I could do. I can't see this in my head but I was trying to use some ideas which were there, and then this was so relaxing. I really liked it."



Ceilidh at the Burns' Night Taste o Hame event

9.6 Language

Language learning was not the prime objective of this project, though non-English speakers did indicate they had learned new language skills in the survey. It was thematically important in a broader sense in our narrative interviews, as illustrated below

"... we must respect our language. We're Lithuanians, we must speak in Lithuanian."

"Well I've definitely improved my skills across language and communication (goes on to describe skills online). Oh, anyway, so yeah, so I have definitely improved my technology skills, beyond what I ever dreamed."

"Because it made me really realise. Yeah, yer mither tongue is important. It's who you are and that's fit we were spikkin about, it's who you are, it's how you communicate. So the language can separate us, fan ye canna spik to een anither, but it can, that understanding of the importance of language bound us thegither."

"Because adults, adults are shy. To be open to other cultures because mainly they can't speak English, or they can't speak different language. This is the main thing I would say because adults they would like to speak straight away in very good level. . . now I am just thinking how to involve them."

It was quite funny because there was only one English speaking person who could speak only English and the rest of us were Polish and she still had to do it in English (Laughs). So it was quite funny, we were all kind of breaking our tongues for K to be in. It was funny and it's very interesting. I really liked this project, the job we had to do. It was so creative."

9.7 Capacity Building/Skills;

Learning was important in this project including capacity building and life skills as well as creative art and craft skills, which contribute to capacity building and life skills such as self-esteem and confidence. The survey showed that 87% of respondents considered they had learnt new skills.

"I never thought I would be the chair of the community and organise the events here."

". . . but I've quite enjoyed playin wi how to use Zoom. That's been quite fun and as I learn new bitties I'm gin to be tryin somin else next wik."

"I've come to realise that I do have skills that I dinna even think about."

Ja, Ja, you need to practise. But now the lockdown time, lockdown, I learned these videos, things and I need, I really need to do good video and I haven't done yet, you see, but, but no this is again how to learn new things. . . it was good experience, actually how to do good video. I didn't know how to do good video with display, resolutions etc. So, it was good. So, I learned something good in this terrible time."

9.8 Empowerment

Empowerment may be defined in many ways but in this context, it is considered to be about control, helping people gain greater control over their lives and circumstances, which leads to greater mental health and well-being. It may be seen as providing levels of power in personal life; culturally (e.g. by challenging pre-conceived ideas; stereotypes); and structurally (wider social and political ideas) (Thomson, 2007).

“What was important to me was watching the people and connections. Finding that if some people were doing a craft, something with their hands while they were using broken English, it was equalising. You might not be good at speaking English yet but you could be really good at knitting, baking a cake or whatever the focus of the activity.”

So it’s definitely been the highlight of my week (Doric class) and I’ve had a bunch of fun with everybody. I didn’t expect to actually feel super comfortable learning a new dialect because I’ve taken other language classes and I usually get very self-conscious just ‘cause I mess up and this had been quite the opposite – both classes- but especially this one, it’s been a lot of fun to blether on.”

I just want to echo the same ‘cos even though I’m from around here, I dinna have any of the dialect and it’s always a bit of a pressure, especially – I’ve said before – with the kids being sort of their mither tongue. And my confidence has definitely improved.”



Tutors and participants both grew in confidence by sharing expertise and learning from each other

9.9 Integration

Integration has already been discussed as a complex idea, but it featured in the discussion by our respondents and their take on it is interesting.

“Anyway, I’m pretty sure we’re going to do some other events and Scottish could come and enjoy and they would see our community, and learn about Lithuania and our Lithuanian community.

“Here (Scotland) it’s different thing, different rules, different guidelines. Different, totally different”

“I think these people are . . . what is the word, when actually the tree will die, like inside is going. What is the word would be in English? Like broken? So these people are broken people because they have something in their mind, no right in my opinion ... they just stay home or are pretending that they are Scottish. But they are really not Scottish. At all. (She goes on to argue for respect of both cultures)

Because it’s really diverse, fae yer buddies fa winted tae learn mair about poetry, tae yer young lass who’s got faimly in the North East and wints tae spik a bit mair Doric, and yer academic folk, who come fer different reasons again. Yeah and yer teachers who just wint tae pinch yer stuff (laughs) I say that in a very light hearted manner.”

“And I never had met any Polish people and it was really interesting as the Banff workshop progressed, my respect for them grew massively, massively (talks about individuals she knows from other cultures) . . . and yeah I have a huge amount of respect for Eastern Europeans that, yeah, we have had it so easy in comparison. We really have, so yeah. And I also found, because I was slightly intimidated by them. Because they are quite stern. And I think, oh God what have I done wrong all the time and as the, because the bunch at Banff all they did was laugh . . . So yeah and I’ve got a huge amount of respect for them and fondness for them as well, and yeah, I hope that when life gets back to normal, or as it does, because I was just getting to know M a little better and it would have been great to continue that.”

“Integration can be used quite negatively to keep people on the outside, if they need to integrate into something, rather than accepting that we’re already present, we’re in what we’re in.”

9.10 Cultural Understanding

Cultural understanding is a component part of integration and so is linked to 9.9. The survey showed that 60% of people with a first language other than English learned about a new culture.

“So, she’s been working with community for 20 years in Lithuania and she is playing our Lithuanian instrument Kanklės . . . and also she is teaching Lithuanian dancing . . . Here is on lap. Usually you just sit down and play like this with Lithuanian dresses or not.”

“ . . . when you use the word ‘culture’ folk think o ballet and opera an aa this kind of thing, but culture is yer day to day fit folk dee so of course is goin to be part of building our online community, so it does feel like a wee community.”

Food is just so central, isn't it . . . And then on Facebook, the hale chat about brose and foo tae eat it. And kale brose is affa fine quine. The bree, cubbage bree or kale. bree to mak yer brose oh aye, it's a hale new taste."

"Yeah, exactly, and you know if there was an opportunity to be introduced to more of the Polish festivals and things like that, I think that would be great Definitely. Not necessarily all the Polish cooking from what I've heard" (laughs).

9.11 Sustainability

The sustainability of the impact and effort put into the project is important. We cannot assess its long-term impact objectively without returning to the participants post the activities but common sense allows us to assess the sustainability of the project through the aforementioned (9.2) ripples that have emanated from the activity. The survey shows significant development of new contacts in friendships and professional links (See section 11.)

"And in the future I hope we're going to do more events where other people could be more involved."

"So maybe in the future, then we're going to be allowed, then maybe they could come to do an event for us and them sing and dance."

So this is what we are planning and she would bring a lot of experience of us as well and that is why I'm thinking, maybe with you, we could do something in the future."

I know that sometimes people are looking for some roots, like family roots or something. So, if you hear about something like this, just give me a shout and I will try to do my best."

10. Quality

The quality of the project run was considered to be high by participants, as evidenced in section 9 of this report. Enjoyment was high, creativity was high and learning/empowerment was apparent. The aim of integration was met according to the definition provided at the beginning of this report. People from different cultures came together and learnt together. They sat side by side in a creative atmosphere. People felt more connected and learning about integration took place. This is discussed further in Section 13.

Participant observation of one class was undertaken by the evaluator. She attended Polish and Scottish Singing. 19 people attended the Zoom class and the following phrases were noted and summed up the quality of the experience and the learning.

Polish, Breton, Scottish and Yiddish songs as celebration of cultures.

Physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

Love and loss in many cultures.

History, humour, togetherness, release and freedom.

Learning how cobblestones are slippery in winter.

Being confident to lead the singing.

11. Scope

The scope of the project was huge. It is impossible to designate the number of people touched by the project because of the 'ripple effect' but the project touched hundreds of people as participants, if we assume an average of 10 people attended each activity, though some were clearly much larger than this. In a year, a large number of activities took place, 114 in the 23 categories listed earlier in this report. There were a number of projects that failed to take off and these were sources of both frustration and learning for the partners. What was learnt was that projects are not necessarily transferable from one place to another and that need is always qualitatively different. A needs analysis consultation was undertaken at the start of the project.

A survey was undertaken, as part of the evaluation, towards the end of the project and it reached 38 respondents and represents a snapshot of the target population. Questions were framed with the outcomes for the project in mind. The evaluation sample also is a representation of the profile of our target demographics (15 non-English as first language + 23 English/Scots speakers).

AGE OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER
26-40	12
41-60	18
61+	8

Social networking was very strong for all respondents. Making new friends and contacts were particularly strong, as well as learning new skills.

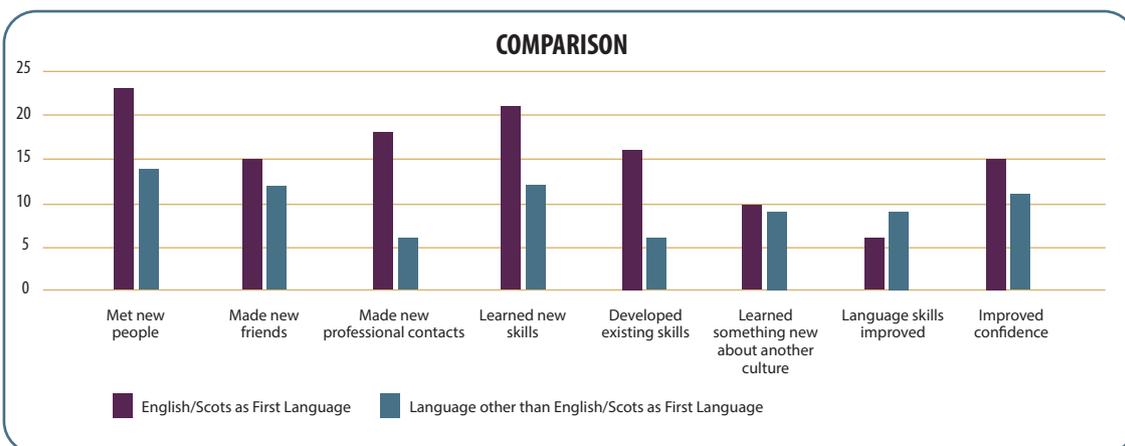
AGE OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER	0% OF TOTAL
Met new people	37	97%
Made new friends	27	71%
Made new professional contacts	24	63%
Learned new skills	33	87%
Developed existing skills	22	58%
Learned something new about another culture	19	50%
Language skills improved	15	39%
Improved confidence	26	68%

The next two tables show the outcomes for people whose first language was other than English/Scots compared to those whose first language was English/Scots. Both groups met new people and made new friends. Both groups reported learning about a new culture, but this was slightly stronger for those with language other than English/Scots. Both groups showed an improvement in confidence. Language skills improvement was not surprisingly higher for those with a first language other than English/Scots. The difference in those who said they had made new friends is interesting being lower for those with English/Scots as their first language (65%) compared to those with language other than English/Scots (80%). So those with a first language other than English/Scots were definitely making friends according to our snapshot survey.

Language other than English/Scots as a First Language results (15 respondents)		
AGE OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER	0% OF TOTAL
Met new people	14	93%
Made new friends	12	80%
Made new professional contacts	6	40%
Learned new skills	12	80%
Developed existing skills	6	40%
Learned something new about another culture	9	60%
Language skills improved	9	60%
Improved confidence	11	73%

English/Scots as a first language results (23 Respondents)		
	NUMBER	0% OF TOTAL
Met new people	23	100%
Made new friends	15	65%
Made new professional contacts	18	78%
Learned new skills	21	91%
Developed existing skills	16	70%
Learned something new about another culture	10	43%
Language skills improved	6	26%
Improved confidence	15	65%

The table below shows a comparison between the two aforementioned groups of people. It is interesting that the trends are broadly the same; but the Non-English speakers noted a bigger improvement in language skills than the English/Scots speakers.



The survey was only a snapshot in time of participants' experiences on the project but mirrors the findings of the qualitative study. The outcomes are very difficult to measure, but this quantitative study and the qualitative study combined, show how the outcomes of the project were met.

The scope of the project overall was huge in a short space of time.

12. Significance

The significance of the project is best illustrated through 3 brief case studies to show examples of the connections, learning and integration that have taken place.

12.1 Extract from Creative Café Focus Group Interview

C - But my last question is for everyone. How do you think, what would be the best way for keeping the connections we've made in this project going? So, this project will be going until September, would you be interested in more cafes? Or do you think people could just be friends through Zoom without the Cafes? How do you think, will you be keeping in touch with anyone that you've met, through this?

B - Well, I would like to invite J and M out to Rosehearty, because J's got a connection to Rosehearty, through, was it your grandparents, J?

. . . and we can go to I's too, so that's an open invitation anyway to catch up with what you've been doing.

B - I'd like the café in Fraserburgh to also... it's good to see people face to face. The Zoom is good, as an alternative, but it's good to see people face to face too. I know you're talking about September, possibly that last session in September, but it would be good to meet up. Well, we'll meet up before September anyway that's for sure, because things are opening up anyway and it's great. And I is quite keen because I did mention that you'd love a visit to her museum of wonders. Well, there you are, she's mentioned it to you today, so she was quite keen to have that. So you must come out to Rosehearty. You seem to be involved in so many things! A talented lad, so we will catch up, definitely.

M - B, can I add something to that? Once she's back from Spain, I would guess Aunty L would want to join in, and it sounds like she already knows I?

B - Yes

M - She stays in Rosehearty, and is involved in the Pitsligo Castle.

B - Right

M - But she's in Spain at the moment, and got locked down in Spain, so she'll have to quarantine, but that would be nice for us too. But you will see us!

B - Good!

The extract above shows the connections between people in Fraserburgh, and the ways they intend to keep in touch after the Cafes are finished.

12.2 Extract from email 3rd Nov 2020 from Wool Engineering Tutor

"Also I have seen E a couple of times and she's really getting into wool! She's spent time with her local farmer and has tested his fleeces (pretty bog standard Texels) for washing and spinning - see how the strands have spread?! I know that knitting and all helps her enormously to combat loneliness. She may come and have Christmas lunch with us if she cannot go home to her family, but fingers crossed she will be able to."

The brief extract above shows local integration between E and the community.

12.3 Section from H's narrative interview about integration as a concept and reality in Peterhead

"Yeah, I was going to say I think when you meet young people maybe more on their own terms, like for instance, I think Modo, the work that Modo does, or did, in Peterhead again with the Encounter Café, so they would promote inclusion and integration in a very real and active way but not in capitals, like, Modo provides that café on a weekly basis - and a lot of people from minority or migrant backgrounds would kind of going along there - but they're not like headlining it as like "this is integration" but they're just providing a service that those local young people actually kind of desire and are interested in and so they'd doing that kind of work very effectively and very visibly.

And I suppose in the background they are connecting to those more lofty, kind of like, goals but just doing it in a very everyday sort of a way and I suppose that's a very meaningful and effective way of including young people and families from migrant backgrounds but without it being the headline goal of the actual activity. Just witnessing that, from going in there, there's young people from all sorts of backgrounds and then also you would be around the town centre there in Peterhead regularly and, even when that Encounter café wasn't open, there would be quite a diverse group of young people outside in the general area playing basketball and they kind of colonised that town centre and felt a sense of belonging and being at home in that town centre as a result of attending that Modo café over a long period of time. And that's, kind of, I suppose, integration quite visibly in action happening there on an everyday basis outside of any project like this and I'd be kind of concerned going forward what's going to replace that or what's that going to look like because from what I understand Modo isn't going to be around going forward."



Behind the scenes while Modo film the 'A Long Way from Home' series

The learning about methods of integration that has been taken from this project may be transferable, is significant, and will apply other projects with a similar aim.

- A. Firstly, that the language of integration needs to be in people's own language, rather than trying to achieve this in a second language. Translating the project documentation into the main community languages attracted a wider range of participants. Including Polish and Doric classes in our programme created opportunities for multidirectional language sharing; and challenges the hegemonic idea of English being the only important language for integration.
- B. Secondly, images are really important part of making learning accessible to people whose first language is not English. Photographs and videos of activities and events were shared on the Home Hame Дом Dom Facebook page as a significant part of our engagement strategy. The pictures tell the story of the project.
- C. Thirdly, the focus on doing was absolutely appropriate for learning and integration to both take place. The 'knowing by doing' approach worked well, bringing people together to undertake an activity, that was not directly language or integration focused.
- D. Fourthly the creative dimension is crucial to the initial and continuing engagement of participants in an integration and learning process. It takes the mind away from what might otherwise be threatening or embarrassing.
- E. Use of technology assisted with the engagement of populations as they joked, laughed, translated using apps and generally problem solved and learned together.
- F. There was learning not to 'parachute in' activities that worked in other areas and not to assume you know what will work in an area. The consultation needs analysis threw up surprises.
- G. Migrants might consider they want to learn grammar as a means of learning language with formal classes, but this was not within the scope of this project. A more naturalistic, informal method still gives plenty of opportunity for language learning.
- H. The emotional vision, energy and passion invested in this project were crucial to its reach, in ensuring events happened and people were able to engage.
- I. Spaces matter. The theme of the project was 'home' and it became apparent that white, soulless community centres did not attract migrants to participate. More informal and pleasant spaces were required for people to feel welcome and safe. There is a need to use venues that have meaning for participants and the need to create a sense of 'place' for participants.
- J. Fostering cultural democracy was important, all forms of culture equally. Bringing cultural leaders into a network was important, as well as creative leaders.
- K. Valuing the vernacular culture was important to not patronise or devalue cultural and creative preferences.
- L. Making management/arrangement systems as non-hierarchical as possible, privileging process over product of the arts activities and ensuring there is co-creation of artefacts.
- M. Paying attention to the atmosphere of activities. Checking the feeling of an event and being open to change where things do not work and this is linked to creating a sense of place as in I.
- N. An unexpected outcome from this project was that other groups who are not necessarily the focus of integration policy, but who were at risk of social exclusion, especially during lockdown, such as older women and people who live alone, reported great benefits from being part of this project in terms of making new social connections, overcoming the digital divide, and increasing confidence.
- Accordingly, the major significance of the project lies in the learning that took place concerning meaningful integration approaches for migrants in Scotland.

13. Challenges

A major challenge to the project was the compressed timescale for an ambitious aim that demanded a community development focus. A three-year time scale would have been preferable to one year. More time to both develop the bid and to develop partnerships for a shared framework for the project would have been desirable. The project was not co-designed with equality between partners in terms of the input to design, partly a product of time constraints. Different expectations of the project were present between partners and different understandings of the aims and of integration. The ambition of the aim also caused some concern to the partners from the perspective of a lack of clarity and understanding about what was expected or intended. Accordingly, outcomes were established by partners for the project. I consider this to be inherent in the complexity of the project, which was multi-layered and had multiple outcomes.

There were challenges in running an agile project, which needed to be flexible because of its complexity, in association with organisations that proved to be bureaucratic and administratively not facilitative.

Finally, the socio-political environment was highly complex with both Brexit and COVID-19 placing new demands on an already complex project, its vulnerable potential and actual participants, and the partners who were having to contend with new ways of working themselves. It is without doubt impressive that the project partners have achieved so much in such a compressed and turbulent timescale.



Evelina in her Lithuanian costume at Kaziuko Mugė Taste of Home event

14. Conclusion and Next Steps

It is a credit to the partners that so much activity took place and resulted in so much learning about integration in such a compressed timescale. At the time of implementation, the project sometimes felt a muddle, but reflection has revealed that the management of complexity led to a very good outcome in terms of the action research and the compressed community development frameworks used. More time would have enabled better shared understanding of the project's aims and outcomes between partners.

If the timescale had been longer, more engaged, in-depth work could have been done, however the friendships, relationships and working partnerships that were developed over the past 18 months will be used to shape any future integration work undertaken by the Elphinstone Institute. Home-Hame-Дом-Dom was shaped by learning from the Ssamis project, and future work will be informed by the legacies of both Ssamis and Home-Hame-Дом-Dom.

The quality of the activities run was high, as evidenced by the narrative inquiries. Not all interventions were successful in terms of participation, but this was arguably inevitable in an action research set of cycles of inquiry and led to learning. For example, Creative Cafés were successful in Fraserburgh and Turriff, but Cafés developed using the same model struggled to get off the ground in Banff and Peterhead. The learning was, that each activity had to be tailored to the needs of each specific community, and that the most successful groups occurred when partnered with other community-led organisations, based in each town.

The Project Co-ordinator said the project has 'taken on a life of its own' and this refers to the longevity and sustainability of the project's networks and connections. It is without doubt a tribute to the Project Co-ordinator's indefatigable passion, energy and motivation that so much activity and learning took place. The partners are also to be congratulated for their efforts and learning about integration for the project. It was apparent from the narrative inquiry with partners that much reflection about integration had taken place.

In terms of the future for Home Hame Дом Dom, new projects are looking for support and the partners will seek funding for these initiatives where these are viable. Events held as part of the end of project Celebration Week have already sparked new ideas. The Polish-Scottish singing group will continue online until June, and an International Storytelling project is being developed. The Elphinstone Institute is interested in working with these communities again so relationships will continue and ways will be sought to support the networks. The Elphinstone Institute is also interested in doing further work to build on this and explore the role of the arts in ethnography in bringing about change in communities. There is a legacy for the interviews undertaken for this evaluation. Where permission is given, the data will be used for future research projects linked to language and communities.

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Appendix A

Exemplar of Activities

CircoModo and the Home Project

Introduction

CircoModo is our style of social circus. It brings together participants from all backgrounds to learn, work and have fun together.

CircoModo gives young people the chance to engage, to learn circus skills and gain life skills and accreditation while they do. It provides positive pathways for young people, celebrating their achievements and improving their life chances. CircoModo is free and open to all aged 10-25.

The programme often ties in with other projects. In the past the group have been involved in hundreds of community events and projects including Peterhead Scottish Week, Aden-reen the Shell Fireworks Parade, On Mass, Doricula and most recently the Home Project.



Some of the group performing at Peterhead Theatre as part of Scottish Week 2019.

Appendix A

Exemplar of Activities

A Taste of Home

Introduction

After discussions at Encounter, Modo worked with young people to raise funds for cultural events. Young people at Encounter are from many different countries, and they said they would like to learn more about each other's cultures and traditions.

In particular it was mentioned that people who had moved here had never tried traditional Scottish food, and those from here had never tried foods from other countries.

It was decided that the young people, with the help from Modo would host 3 cultural celebration events. The young people decided it would be a good idea to celebrate different traditions from different countries. They decided to celebrate 1 Scottish, 1 Lithuanian and 1 Polish tradition.

Modo then worked in Partnership with Peterhead Central School, ALNES (The association of Lithuanians in North East Scotland) and the 'Home' Project to plan these events.

Peterhead Central School was the venue chosen to host these events as it is based in the centre of town and has the highest number of Eastern Europeans out of all the schools in Peterhead.

A Taste of Home was funded by Aberdeenshire Youthbank.



The entertainment was good and it reminded me of home and my culture.

Appendix A

Exemplar of Activities

Encounter and the Home Project

Introduction

A pilot project led by Modo in collaboration and partnership with Community Planning Partners (in particular those concerned with Community Safety and Young People) and identified as a priority both by the young people themselves, Community Planning and Police Scotland.

Encounter Youth Café was born out of a need demonstrated by, and a partnership created by, Oot and Aboot. Recognising that diversionary activity can only be successful where there is somewhere for young people to go, and learning from successful models (eg Elgin Youth Café), Encounter created a safe, central space where young people can come to socialise, and to access services.

Over the years it has been in operation, it has welcomed thousands of people through its doors, been host to hundreds of sessions and events, provided a much needed safe space for young people in the centre of town, given the international communities somewhere to go to learn English, to gain support and advice and most importantly to integrate, and has acted as a catalyst for a variety of creative and cultural activities.

Encounter Youth Café is free to attend and open to all under 25



Encounter brings a lot of people here that wouldn't normally be together.



Christmas wreath making at the creative cafe



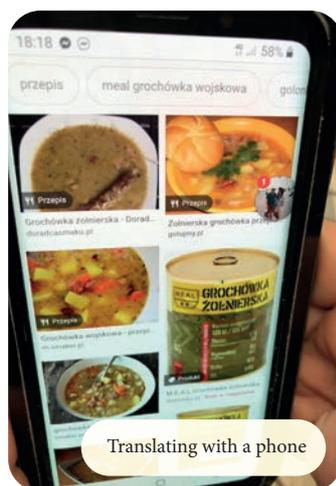
Haggis and neeps



Project co-ordinator Claire



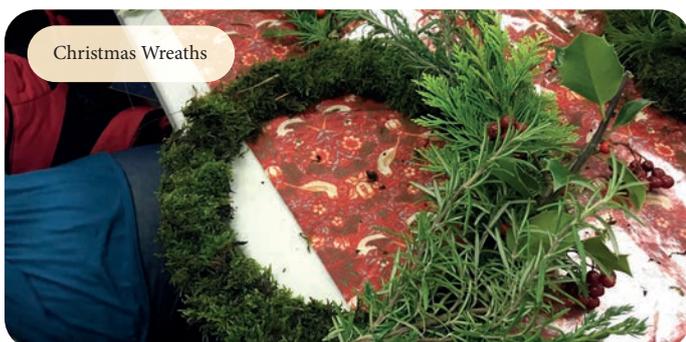
Sharing sewing and language skills



Translating with a phone



Wax carving at the Smiddy



Christmas Wreaths



Lithuanian potato pancake



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: **Europe investing in rural areas**

The North Aberdeenshire LAG is being part-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community LEADER 2014-2020 programme