

# **17/18 Central Good Relations Fund**

## **FINAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**Co-operation Ireland**

**Circle of Learning**

**April 2018**

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## **1. About Co-operation Ireland**

Co-operation Ireland works to promote and encourage interaction, dialogue, and practical collaboration between the peoples of Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

### ***Our Vision***

Co-operation Ireland's vision is of

*A peaceful and stable island where people of all backgrounds live and work together for a better future*

### ***Our Mission***

Our mission is to *sustain peace by helping to build a shared and cohesive society.*

Co-operation Ireland does this by working in partnership with others in these islands to:

- Develop initiatives which address emerging challenges to peace
- Facilitate understanding, positive relationships and co-operation across these islands, building a sense of interdependence

- Create a supportive environment by building capacity, influencing policy, and developing collaboration at a strategic level
- Share our learning and experience of peace building and practical co-operation internationally

## **Background**

The Circle of Learning aims to ensure continuity of learning within communities by connecting those with experience and knowledge with those that are just starting out on the road of active citizenship, community organising and development. The Circle of Learning project will work on the principles of support from informal learning through networking, discussion, analysis, site visits and practical application of knowledge. The project acknowledges the experience of those that work in a voluntary capacity and using the practical co-operation to build new and sustainable links on a cross-community basis.

Circle of Learning recruited 4 host organisations in Derry/Londonderry, Mid Ulster, Belfast and Lurgan known as hubs who worked with 3 marginalised groups in each area, supporting them to progress in their development and to identify and address local issues.

The programme targeted areas and groups with limited previous involvement in peace building and which continue to face challenges relating to the legacy of the conflict.

The following groups took part in the programme:

### **Belfast Hub** (Hub-Groundwork NI))

- The Plough Mens Group
- Lower Beersbridge and Willowfield Residents Group
- Randalstown Mens Group

### **Mid Ulster Hub** (Hub-Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association)

- Garvagh Cultural Awareness Association
- Leckagh Neighbourhood Group
- Randalstown Cultural Awareness Association

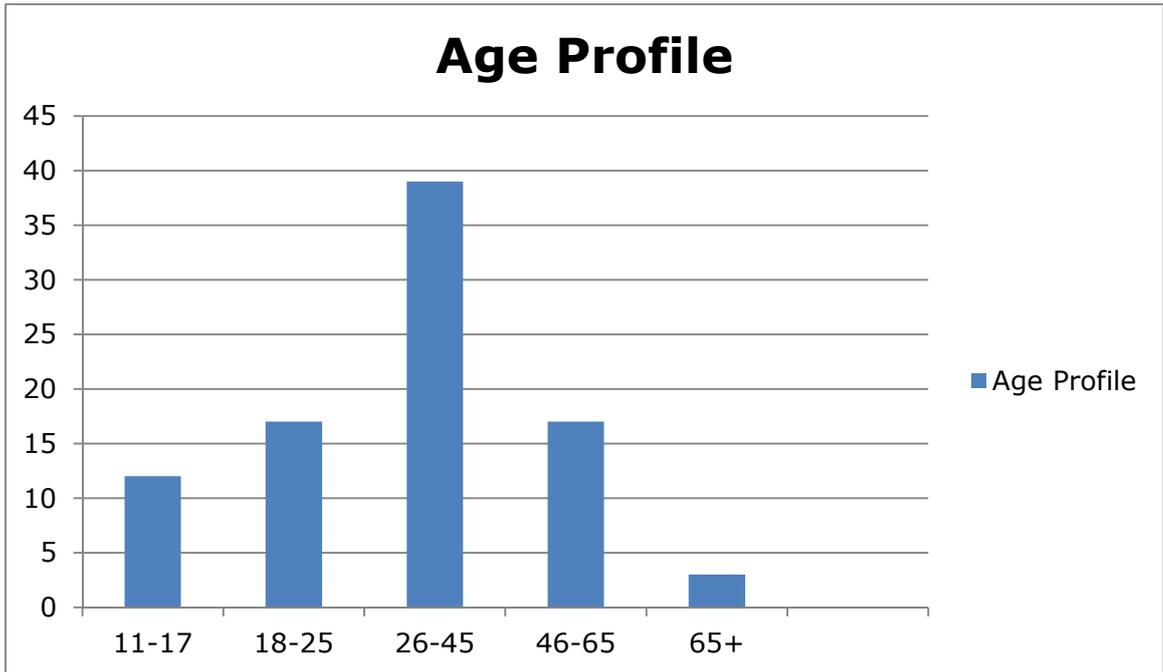
### **Lurgan Hub** (Hub- Jethro Centre)

- Community Outreach Group
- Lurgan College/St Ronan's College Shared Education Programme
- Queen's Street Residents Association

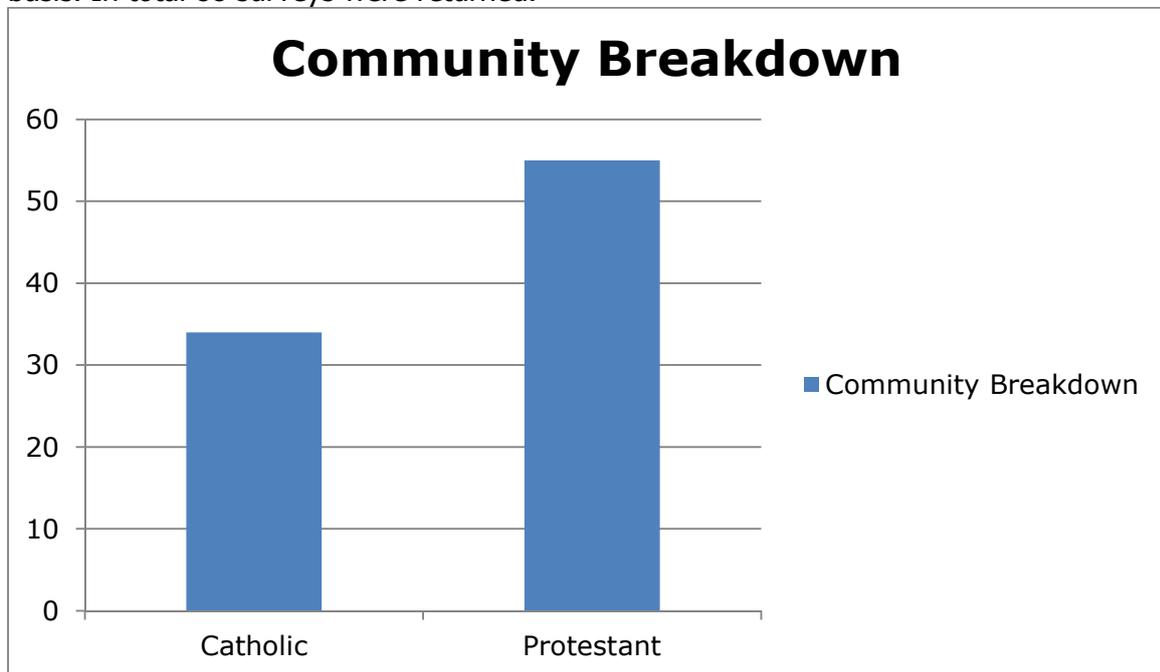
### **Derry/Londonderry Hub** (Hub- Leafair Community Association)

- Glenabbey Community Association
- North Belfast Mens Craft Group
- Skeoge House Women's Group

**2. Profile of Participants from Questions 1-5 on Evaluation Sheet for Each Activity**



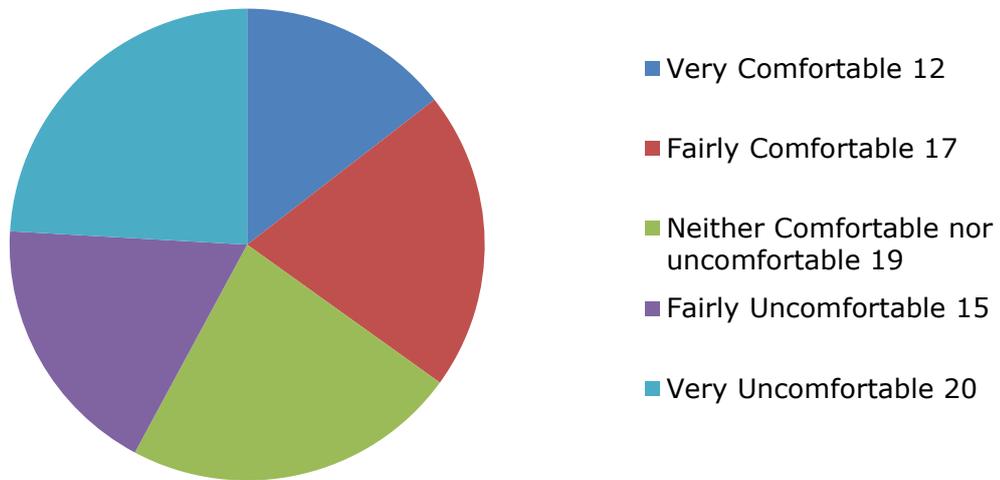
Over 100 participants actively took part in the project with an average age of 26-45 years old. This number does not include people who attend meetings or events on a 'one off' basis. In total 88 surveys were returned.



Of the 88 surveys returned 54 were from the Protestant community and 34 identified themselves as Catholic.

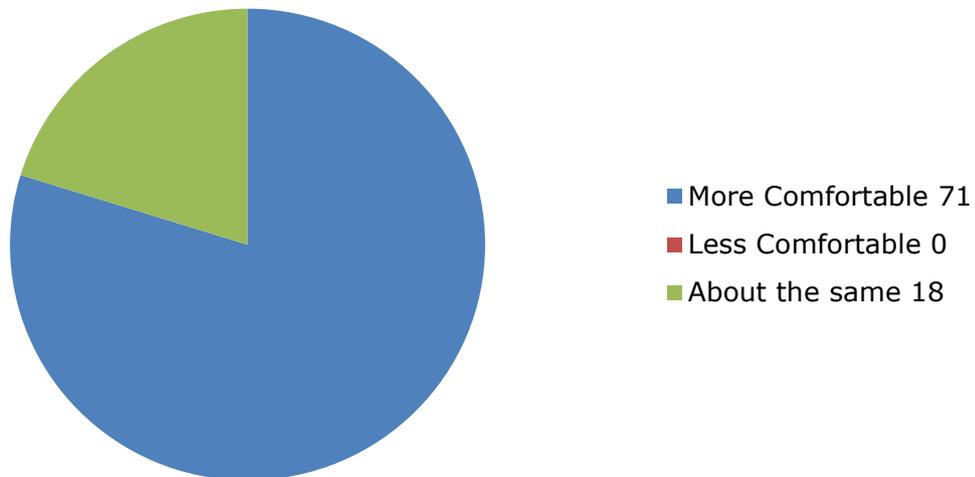
**3. Summary of Outcomes Measured –Attitudinal Changes for overall project**

## Before Programme-Comfortable Shared Space



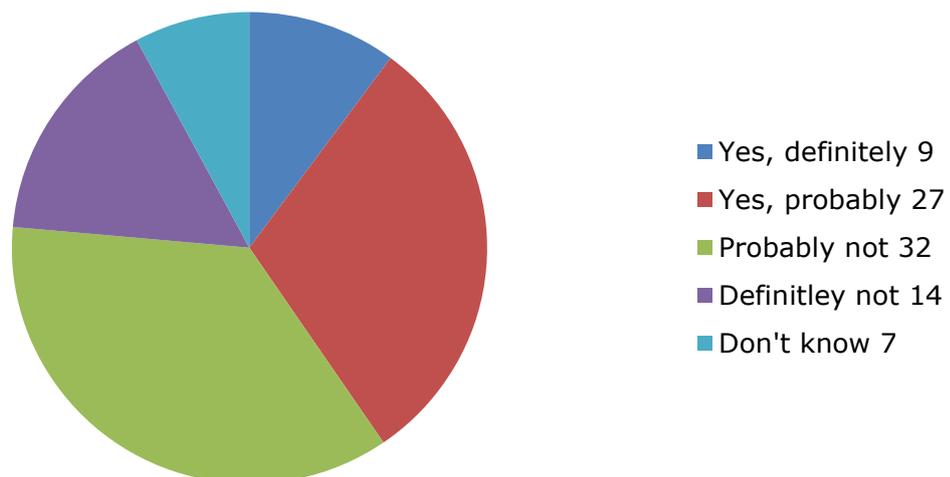
From the surveys returned 20 participants were very uncomfortable attending events in a shared space or space they would not traditionally visit.

## After Programme-Comfortable in a Shared Space

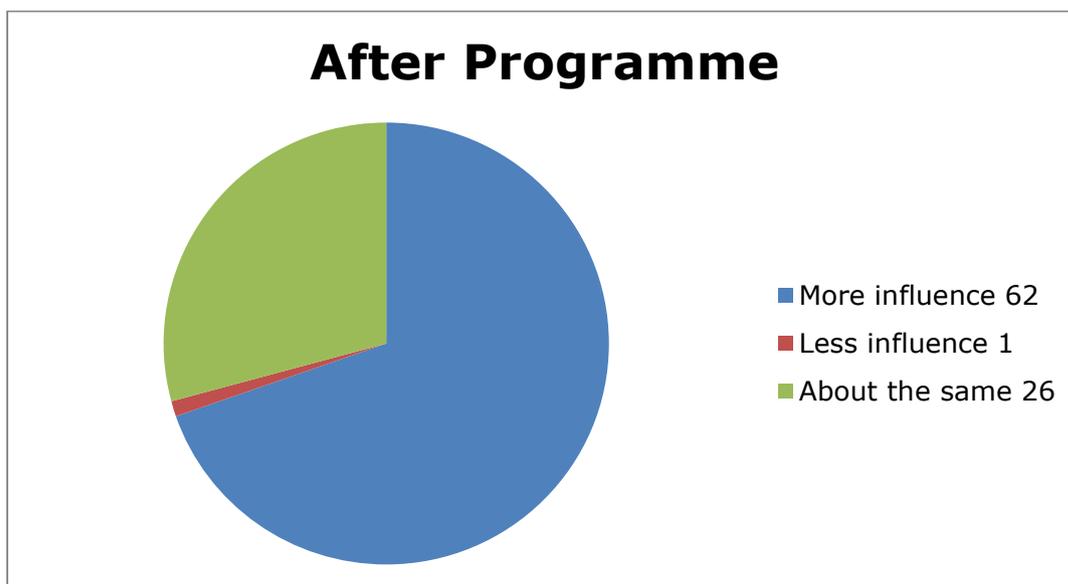


After the project completed 71 participants reported feeling more comfortable in shared spaces.

## Before Programme - Influence in decisions in local neighbourhood



As the programme core objective is to create a network of local contacts and build the capacity of small groups with the help of a local well established hub it was significant that 32 people felt they probably had no influence in local decisions.



This figure of 32 had changed to 62 people feeling they had more influence after the programme ended.

#### 4. Feedback from participants

Overall the participants were highly engaged with the project and benefitted from a range of interventions. The mentoring support which was locally based, and responded to individual queries meant that small groups had bespoke support and an environment they felt comfortable in to ask questions in. The networking events allowed mentors to find out about different issues in different geographic areas. The social action projects gave ownership of a small budget and a locally identified project to be resolved or developed by local residents. One of the groups commented on how much confidence the programme gave them to ask for support and the opportunity to meet with similar groups from other areas.

#### Case study

Leakagh Estate is a predominantly loyalist housing estate in Magherafelt and suffers from high levels of deprivation, a lack of confidence to engage with public bodies and an apathy towards good relations activities. Leakagh Neighbourhood Group was formed by local residents to address some of the issues in the estate and is supported by Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association (SCAA). As a hub based in the town of Magherafelt SCAA were aware of the need for a flexible project to develop and support the Neighbourhood Group, and used the model in Circle of Learning to carry out a baseline skills audit and devise an action plan for their social action project. The baseline audit showed very limited experience in networking, dealing with statutory agencies, running meetings (eg minute taking, setting agenda's, role of chair etc) , and dealing with good relations issues in the estate.

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Group would tackle two issues:

- The removal of red white and blue kerb painting and
- Organise a Christmas Carol service for the whole estate and wider community.

The removal of the kerb painting initially had a lot of resistance and took a lot of negotiation, compromise and agreement from a range of stakeholders including local residents, NIHE, PSNI, Dept for Infrastructure and Supporting Communities NI. At its low point local youths threatened to paint other kerbs in opposition to the removal. In the end agreement was reached and the paint removal was completed.

The Christmas Carol service was a huge success; it brought together a very diverse range of residents and was very well supported. Leaflets were designed, printed and delivered to the whole area, invites were extended to the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, and other local dignitaries, local musicians provided the entertainment, children got a small gift (selection box), and local media coverage was that it had been a positive event for the area. It did an enormous amount to raise community spirit and the Neighbourhood Group thrived at organising a successful event with full community support.

## **5. Key Findings and Conclusions**

The 2017/2018 Circle of Learning Programme successfully contributed to the provision of a network of support and building of capacity among marginalised communities across Northern Ireland. Participating groups highlighted a wide range of flexible supports and assistance provided by the hubs and mentors and also support to access training and development opportunities. Examples of skills and learning gained during the project included good governance, holding effective meetings, managing volunteers, applying for funding, and handling conflict. Most groups were able to identify specific changes that came about as result of participation in the Circle of Learning programme, and demonstrated where they had opportunities implement their learning.

Circle of Learning also successfully helped groups to network and exchange learning with groups from diverse backgrounds, both locally and across the region. Groups were also supported to develop links outside the Circle of Learning network in their wider communities. The opportunities for engagement and discussion provided by the project also contributed to addressing good relations issues and conflict legacies, creating safe spaces for new links and conversations in some areas and enabling people to attend events in areas and communities they would not previously have visited. Some of the mentors spoke of the 'spin off' developments that are taking place because smaller groups now have both the confidence and contacts to develop their capacity across the local area and the region.

The hub and mentor structure has proved a very significant element of the project, with groups greatly valuing the dedicated mentoring support which they received from more experienced community organisations in their area, often locally based mentors. One participant commented on how a local established organisation/hub who were aware of the history of issues came up with simple solutions, whereas to explain all the issues to a facilitator from outside the area would have been problematic and prolonged a resolution.

For Co-operation Ireland, the model broadened the reach of Circle of Learning by providing access to new groups within the hub's existing networks, and in some cases included previous Circle of Learning beneficiaries who were still making use of the network. The flexibility of funding available for the local action plans under the project was also a significant strength, ensuring that activities were responsive to group needs and complemented other funding streams. In Lurgan, in particular, Circle of Learning funding enabled Shankill Caring Parish Association to integrate and enhance other streams of work that were in place in the Lurgan area.

## Survey of Evaluation Sheets- SUMMARY

### Circle of Learning **Participants**

*Refer to Appendix A guidelines*

**Co-Operation Ireland**

**Participants Survey Questions**

#### Circle of Learning Programme

1. What age are you \_\_\_\_\_  
0-10  11-17 = 12 18-25 =17 26-45 =39 46-65 =17 65+ =3
2. What do you do? – tick any that apply to you.  
In school =10  
In alternative education =0  
In further education =4  
In training =5  
In full time work =42  
In part-time work =17  
Other =10– please specify: *Retired or Unemployed*
3. What cross community contact have you had?  
None =22 A little=28 Some =27 A lot =11
4. What is your community background?  
Protestant =55 Catholic =33  
Other=1 - (Please Specify) *Not specified.*
5. What best describes your ethnic background?  
White 87 Chinese  Irish Traveller  Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi  Black  
Caribbean  Black African  Black Other  Mixed 1 Other   
If mixed or other, please give details: *Not Specified*

6. Before you started the programme, how comfortable did you feel attending events in a shared space or space you would not traditionally visit?

Very comfortable =12 Fairly comfortable =17 Neither comfortable or uncomfortable =19 Fairly uncomfortable=15 Very uncomfortable 20 Don't know =6

At the end of the programme, would you say you felt:

More comfortable	71
Less comfortable	0
About the same	18

7. Before you started the programme, do you feel you had any influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in your neighbourhood?

Yes, definitely =9 Yes probably =27 Probably not =32 Definitely not= 14  
Don't know =7

At the end of the programme, would you say you felt you had:

More influence	=62
Less influence	=1
About the same	=26

**Appendix B**

**Completed Attendance Register** Circle of Learning **Project**

*Insert attendance sheets for regular activities for direct participants*

*Insert attendance sheets for any indirect participants*

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of session and date</b>	<b>Name of session and date</b>								

**Pictures of Events**





*Please refer to instructions on Annex D of guidelines*

**FINAL PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT ATTENDANCE/TARGETS AND PROGRAMME DELIVERABLE OUTCOMES FROM ANNEX C IN YOUR LETTER OF OFFER**

**Group Name:** Co-operation Ireland

**Project Name :** Circle of Learning

**Amount awarded:** £60,000

**Have the activity outputs and targets been delivered?**

**THESE ARE THE ACTIVITIES LISTED IN ANNEX C IN THE LETTER OF OFFER. PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE 'YELLOWED' OUT AREA IN THE TABLE BELOW. YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING COLUMNS:**

**“ INSERT HOW MUCH YOU HAVE DONE”**

**“INSERT THE FINAL PARTICIPANTS/AGE CATEGORY/COMMUNITY SPLIT AFTER THE ACTIVITIES WERE COMPLETED”**

**“RATIONALE IF TARGETS NOT ACHIEVED”**

Activity	Target attendance and number of sessions/workshops	How much have you done?	Target Participants/age category and CRN/PUL per your Annex C	What was final target participants/age category/community split after the activities?	Rationale if targets not achieved
<p>Circle of Learning programme March 2018</p>	<p>Create 4 hubs, with 3 low capacity groups in each hub on a cross community basis. Community Split</p> <p>50% PUL 50% CNR</p> <p>HUBs are to be located in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan &amp; Mid/East Antrim.</p> <p>12 groups received professional mentoring support.</p> <p>12 local action plans produced.</p> <p>12 networking meetings hosted by local groups on a cross community basis.</p> <p>2 cross community residentials with participants from all 12 Groups.</p>	<p>4 hubs have been created and have in turn identified 3 groups each to support.</p> <p>There is a 50:50 split in within the 12 lower capacity groups (some of the groups were already cross community in membership). The hubs are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Groundwork in Belfast,</li> <li>2. Leafair Community Association in Derry/Londonderry</li> <li>3. Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association in Magherafelt</li> <li>4. Shankill Caring Parish Association (Jethro Centre) Lurgan.</li> </ol> <p>12 groups received professional mentoring support.</p> <p>12 local action plans were completed.</p> <p>12+ Networking meetings</p>	<p>Create 4 hubs, with 3 low capacity groups in each hub on a cross community basis. Community Split</p> <p>50% PUL 50% CNR</p>	<p>All targets achieved. See tables below for age range and community split.</p>	

		<p>took place to include the whole network and smaller network meetings.</p> <p>2 Residential's took place one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry. The Belfast residential attendance was lower than anticipated due to adverse weather conditions and participants unable to make journeys into the City. The Derry/Londonderry residential was oversubscribed.</p>			
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Total number of CRN at start of your project= 33

Total number of CRN at end of your project =33 and percentage from start target= 100%

Total number of PUL at start of your project =55

Total number of PUL at end of your project =55 and percentage from start target =100%

Total number of Other at start of your project =1

Total number of Other at end of your project =1 and percentage from start target =100%

**Have Outcomes been achieved? Please detail:**

**KEY PRIORITY 4: OUR CULTURAL EXPRESSION**

**Project Level Outcome**

**T:BUC 4.1 Increased sense of community belonging (widens contribution beyond community background).**

Question: An increase in the percentage of participants who feel they have an influence when it comes to the local decisions made in their neighbourhood.

**Statistics from outcome T:BUC 4.1**

CRN						PUL						OTHER					
BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT		
Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%
Definitely	5	15	More of a sense of belonging	20	60	Definitely	4	7	More of a sense of belonging	40	74	Definitely			More of a sense of belonging	1	
Probably	11	33	Less of a sense of belonging	0		Probably	15	27	Less of a sense of belonging	1	2	Probably			Less of a sense of belonging		
Probably not	10	30	About the same	13	40	Probably not	22	40	About the same	13	24	Probably not	1		About the same		
Definitely not	4	12				Definitely not	10	19				Definitely not					
Don't know	3	10				Don't know	4	7				Don't know					

**KEY PRIORITY 2: OUR SHARED COMMUNITY**

## Project Level Outcome

### T:BUC 2.1 Increased use of shared space and services (e.g. leisure centres, shopping centres, education, and housing).

Question: An increase in the percentage of participants who feel comfortable going to events in venues they would not traditionally visit.

#### Statistics from outcome T:BUC 2.1

CRN						PUL						OTHER					
BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT		
Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%
Very comfortable	9	26	More comfortable	28	83	Very comfortable	4	7	More comfortable	42	78	Very comfortable			More comfortable	1	
Fairly comfortable	12	35	Less comfortable	0		Fairly comfortable	2	4	Less comfortable	0		Fairly comfortable	1		Less comfortable		
Neither comfortable of uncomfortable	6	18	About the same	6	17	Neither comfortable of uncomfortable	19	35	About the same	12	22	Neither comfortable of uncomfortable			About the same		
Fairly uncomfortable	4	12				Fairly uncomfortable	11	21				Fairly uncomfortable					
Very uncomfortable	3	9				Very uncomfortable	18	33				Very uncomfortable					

#### Summary of outcomes achieved

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<b>Chair or Secretary Signature :</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
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**DO NOT USE**

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

**COMPOSITE SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES ACHIEVED UNDER EACH T:BUC PRIORITY**

**Statistics from outcome T:BUC 2.1**

CRN						PUL						OTHER					
BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT		
Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%
Very comfortable			More comfortable			Very comfortable			More comfortable			Very comfortable			More comfortable		
Fairly comfortable			Less comfortable			Fairly comfortable			Less comfortable			Fairly comfortable			Less comfortable		
Neither comfortable of uncomfortable			About the same			Neither comfortable of uncomfortable			About the same			Neither comfortable of uncomfortable			About the same		
Fairly uncomfortable						Fairly uncomfortable						Fairly uncomfortable					
Very uncomfortable						Very uncomfortable						Very uncomfortable					

**Statistics from outcome T:BUC 4.1**

CRN						PUL						OTHER					
BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT			BEFORE THE PROJECT			AFTER THE PROJECT		
Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%	Category	Num	%
Definitely			More of a sense of belonging			Definitely			More of a sense of belonging			Definitely			More of a sense of belonging		
Probably			Less of a sense of belonging			Probably			Less of a sense of belonging			Probably			Less of a sense of belonging		
Probably not			About the same			Probably not			About the same			Probably not			About the same		
Definitely not						Definitely not						Definitely not					
Don't know						Don't know						Don't know					