

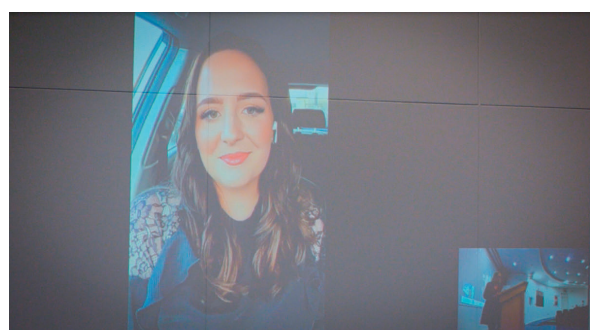
Forming Partnerships During Stormy Times

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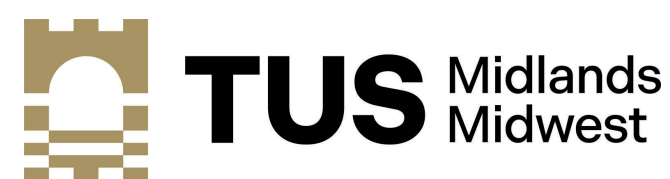
Culture Night 2022:
A collaboration project between
TUS Midwest Access Service,
Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TRTP) and
LSAD graduate Francesca Hutchinson



'We're not all the same..... you can't judge a book by its cover'
Michael O Reilly



'Remember, you can do anything you set your mind to'
Francesca Hutchinson



Background

With the development of a specific Traveller support position in TUS Midwest, we have been able to build stronger relationships with Travellers and organisations who support Travellers.

Due to the pandemic and the restrictions that were put in place it proved difficult to meet with students and organisations in person. Several initial meetings were held virtually until restrictions were lifted.

The Effect of Covid-19

It took time for our partnership to form with TRTP due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. Some events were rescheduled several times.

During this time we remained in constant contact with TRTP staff, ensuring to further build and maintain our partnership. We discussed potential ways we could collaborate. However, we could not engage with the children during restrictions due to limited access to internet and electronic devices.

With thanks to our colleagues in TUS's Culinary Arts Department we facilitated a 4 hour culinary workshop in May 2022.

Due to the success of this workshop it resulted in further collaboration in the form of an event celebrating Traveller Culture and Education.



Culture Night

- The children's artwork was displayed on the night.
- Speeches on the night were given by Frances O Connell (TUS), Roger Kennedy (Cathaoirleach of Tipperary County Council), Mags Casey (TRTP), Francesca Hutchinson (artist) and Michael O Reilly who participated in the art workshop.
- Participants of the art workshop were presented with certificates of participation.
- Musician Steo Wall performed music on the night
- Video footage of the night was recorded and added to the Culture Night video. This video was shortlisted for *Our EU Story Awards*.
- This Culture Night event cemented our relationship with TRTP and the Traveller community in Cashel. We continue to maintain our relationship with TRTP and explore further ways we can collaborate.

Recommendations

- Work on maintaining relationships with partner organisations.
- Listen to what organisations and children want from pre-entry initiatives.
- Look at alternative ways for events to happen, if required.
- Review each initiative to determine their successes and failures, with a view to continually learning and improving partnerships.

Introduction

Our working relationship with Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TRTP) began in early 2022.

A staff member of TRTP and also a past student of LIT contacted the Access Service about running a culinary workshop for Traveller children living in Cashel.

At the time Covid-19 restrictions were still affecting the type of initiatives we could run.



Art Workshop

- It was established we would facilitate an art workshop for the children, with an aim to exhibiting the art work on Culture Night.
- With funding from various organisations we were able to employ a student to run the art workshop for the children supported by TRTP.
- Francesca Hutchinson (LSAD graduate and current masters student) facilitated a four-day art workshop for up to 19 Traveller school children from Cashel.
- In this workshop the children designed identity boxes, showcasing what their identity means to them.
- The impact of a Traveller college graduate working with the children was huge. There were many conversations throughout the workshop about Traveller culture and about experiences of the education system.
- On the final day of the workshop, Nathan O Connor (Access Service Staff) recorded footage from the day with the purpose of creating a short video to show on Culture Night. The video really captured what the art workshop entailed and what the children see as part of their identity.

