

Student Experience Project

Culture in the community University of Bradford Students' Union

In this project, groups of international students developed a performance or activity relating to their culture which was then taken out into the local community – initially into local schools. This provided volunteering opportunities for international students, encouraged an international outlook among students and the community, and enhanced intercultural communication skills among student volunteers.

The project was timed to coincide with a performance night as part of Bradford Students' Union One World Week (OWW) at the end of February/early March. It then went 'on tour' to local schools.

Timeline

November 2015

Contacts were established within societies looking for potential performers but despite some interest, exams and essays prohibited practice. An International Student Officer was recruited to lead on One World Week.

January 2016

Increasing interest among students about the performance night. Costumes were bought.

February 2016

One World Week: hundreds of students attended the Gala Performance and other events such as the international fair, football tournament, cooking competition, and others.

April/May 2016

Gala Performance 'on tour'. Students



Bradford students at Hazelbeck Special School, Monday 16 May 2016

performed songs, dances and poetry from their countries, wore traditional clothes and talked about their country. The group visited several Bradford inner city schools with different groups; mostly primary schools, some special schools.

Challenges

- **Exam times.** One World Week started in March meaning the performers' list was finalised when students were facing essay deadlines, making them unavailable. Similarly many schools were preparing for tests of various kinds so were unable to offer dates for a performance.
- **Getting the message across.** The original idea was to visit care homes and the elderly, but many did not respond to communication or failed to understand the benefits of the proposed project.

Sustainability

The project has become a key part of the One World Week programme. Thanks to the UKCISA grant and project Bradford now has a bank of costumes available for students to wear for the performances, keeping future costs down.

Recommendations

- Contact community groups as early as possible and do this in person if possible.
- Recruit student performers as early as possible.
- Allocate a budget. Students' Union volunteering could be an option for funding. Funds are primarily needed for transportation.

This project was run by Michael Allhouse, UBU Student Engagement Manager.

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