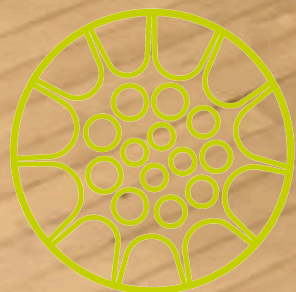


Elderly people learn to play steel pan

Evaluation report 2023



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Executive summary

The National Lottery Community Fund funded this project.

84 elderly people took part in a music steel pan workshop for 28 weeks. The project was one day a week and for 2-hours per session, August 2022 – February 2023.

All senior citizens attended at least 2 workshops, 42 senior citizens attended most weeks and 22 people did a performance in December 2022 at Northolt High School Senior Citizens annual Christmas party.

The workshops took place at the Rectory Park Community Centre in Northolt and Northolt High School.

Northolt High School has been organizing a senior citizens Christmas party for over 10 years that we learned about during the project. This gave us an opportunity for collaboration where our participants performed at this event attended by over 200 senior citizens from the London Borough of Ealing and neighbouring boroughs.

Northolt High School Christmas party is attended by a majority of British white people and they were keen to diversify this event through our activity. There was a 15% increase of people of other backgrounds and ethnicities that attended as a result of the diversity of elderly people learning to play steel pan.



Steel Pan Trust initiated this project because of the social impact on elderly people after the coronavirus reported by the government and specifically in the London borough of Ealing. Main points included:

Among older people (aged 60 years and over) who were worried about the effect the coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives, their main concerns were being unable to make plans in general (64.5%), personal travel plans such as holidays (53.4%) and their own well-being (51.4%).

Of those who said their well-being had been



affected by the coronavirus, the most common ways older people said it had been affected were being worried about the future (70%), feeling stressed or anxious (54.1%) and being bored (43.3%).

Steel Pan Trust is currently (and during the duration of this project) delivering steel pan workshops at Community Centres across London for people of all ages and abilities; funded by the Greater London Authority and the Freshwater Foundation. One of the locations is at the Rectory Park Community Centre in Northolt and senior citizens that really enjoyed this project also attended some of these sessions. This gave them more opportunities to socialise with a diverse group of people in their community from all ages and backgrounds and to continue to improve on learning a new skill.

The project was an overall success with 98% of senior citizens rating it 5 out of 5, 100% said they would play the steel pan again and over 70% felt more connected and a sense of belonging to their local community.

Summary findings



100% of elderly people said listening and learning to play steel pan made them feel happy.

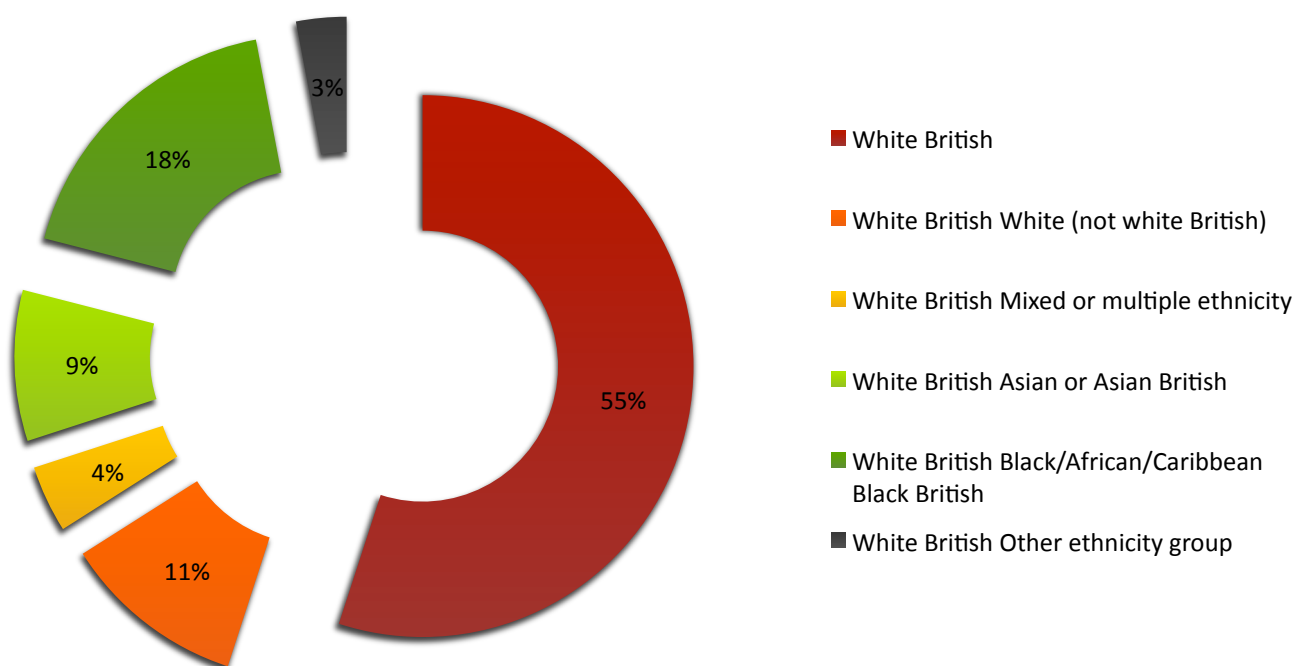
98% of people that did our music workshop rated it 5 out of 5 and 2% rated it 4 out of 5.

100% of our participants said they would play the steel pan again.

We are very proud of the friendships that many elderly people formed attending our music workshops that still continue to this day.

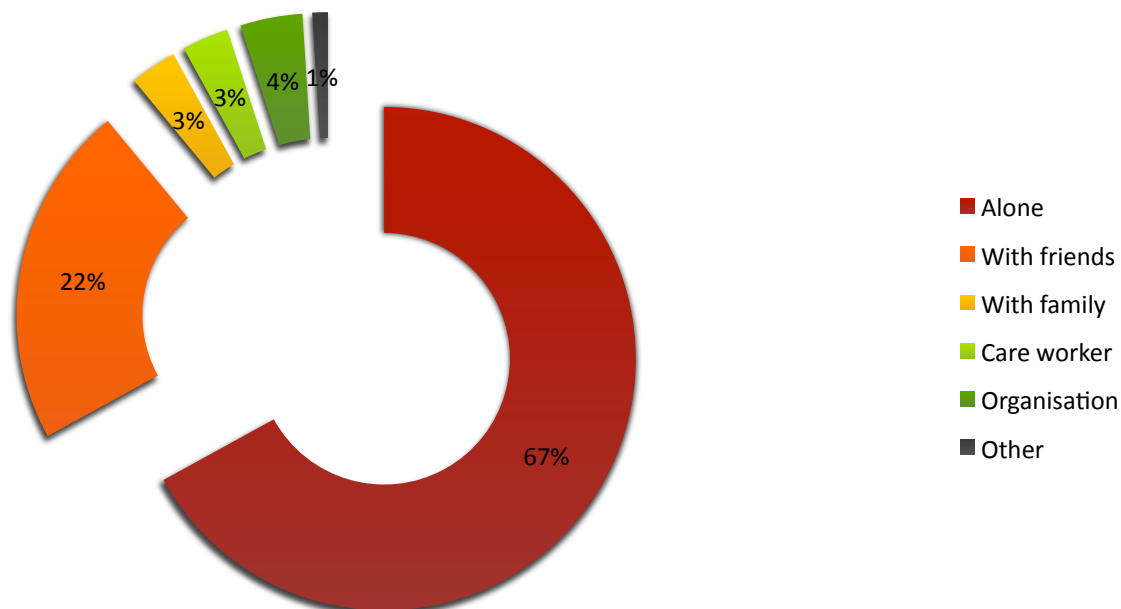
Ethnicity breakdown

55% of elderly people were white British and 11% were of other white backgrounds that were mostly Polish people. 18% were Black/African/Caribbean and 9% Asian. 7% were from different ethnicities.



Travel

67% travelled to the Rectory Park Community Centre and Northolt High school alone and 25% with friends or family. 7% travelled with an elderly organisation or care worker.

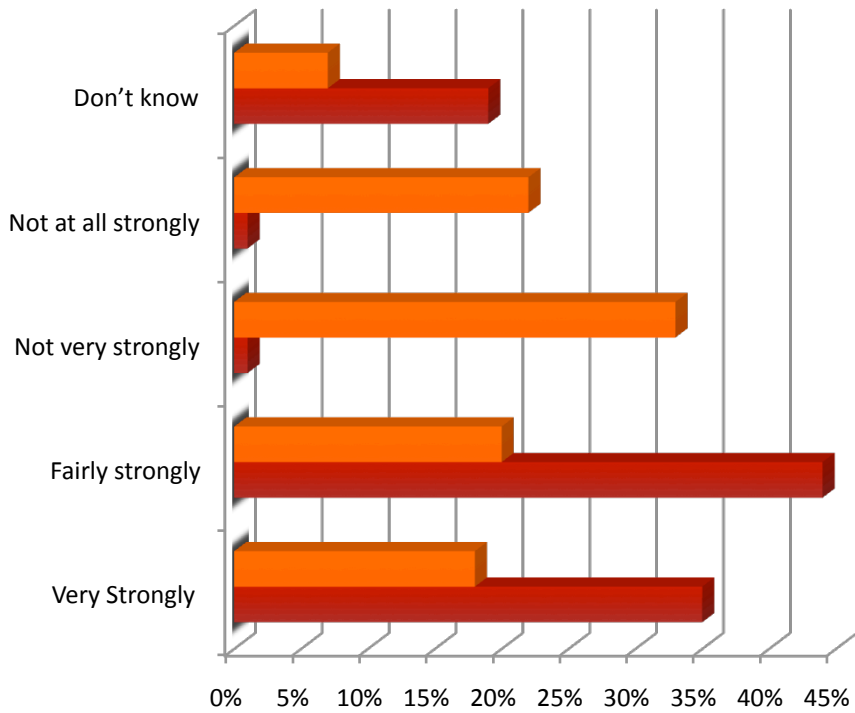


At the start of today's session, do you have a connection or a sense of belonging to your local area and/or community? ('community' for you might mean, your faith, sexuality, racial heritage, local neighbourhood – it is whatever the word means to you).

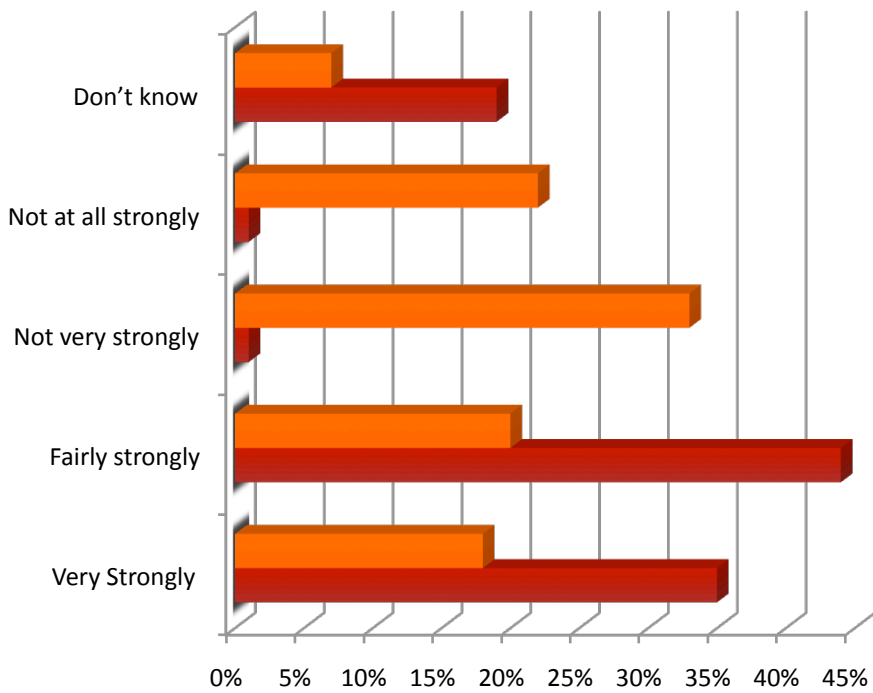
At the start of the project 53% of elderly people did not feel very strongly connected or not at all strongly connected to their local community. By the end of the project 79% felt very strongly or fairly strongly connected to their local community.

At the end of today's session how strongly do you feel connected with other members of your community and/or other communities? (community could mean to your faith, sexuality, racial heritage, local neighbourhood - it is whatever it means to you).

At the start of the project 60% of elderly people did not feel very strongly connected or not at all strongly connected to other members in their local community. By the end of the project 88% felt very strongly or fairly strongly connected to other members in their local community.



- At the start of today's session, do you have connected or a sense of belonging to your local area and/or community?
- At the end of this last session, how strongly do you feel a sense of connection or belonging to your local area and/or community?



- At the start of today's session how strongly do you feel connected with other members of your community and/or other communities?
- At the end of this last session, how strongly do you feel connected with other members of your community and/or other communities?

Based on your experience of this opportunity, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

I think the experience has helped me to feel more part of my community

97% agree that their experience of learning to play steel pan helped them to feel more part of their community.

I have met new people/expanded my social network

89% made new friends and expanded their social networks.

I feel less lonely and socially isolated since becoming a participant of this project

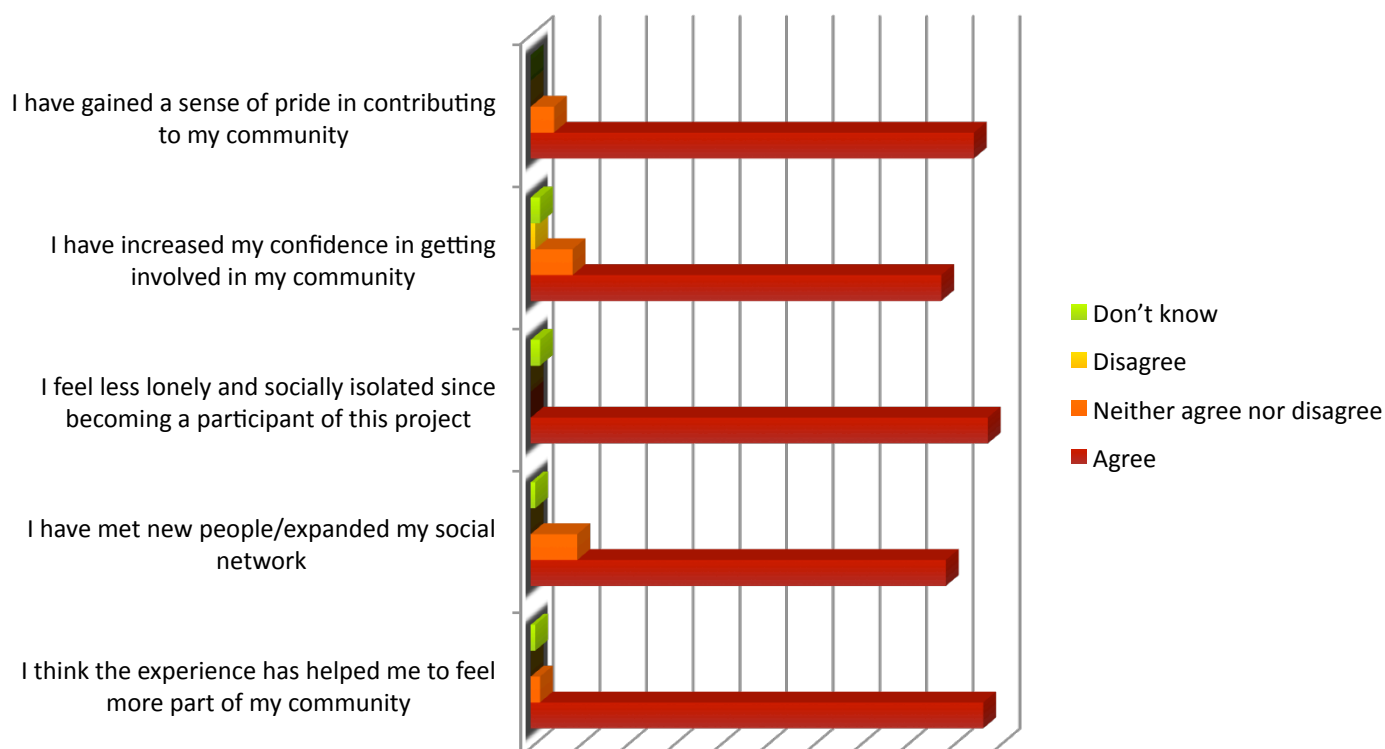
98% reported that they felt less lonely and socially isolated by attending weekly sessions, taking part in the workshop or sitting and listening to a steelband perform with others.

I have increased my confidence in getting involved in my community

88% said it has increased their confidence in getting involved in their community. Some have found other community projects in the local community to keep up their momentum.

I have gained a sense of pride in contributing to my community

95% agree they feel a sense of pride and achievement from learning a new skill. This percentage was higher among those that showcased their skills at the Christmas event in December 2022 at Northolt high School.





Accessibility

The project was not accessible to everyone due to some senior citizens limited mobility and transportation needs.

Lessons learned

Northolt High School paid for cabs for some senior citizens to attend workshops at their school. Transportation needs more consideration to ensure access for all.

The initial project did not include a performance, this was introduced during the project and was a fantastic way to showcase new skills learned. They felt a real sense of achievement from this and we believe a showcase is an important aspect for this project.

Many local senior citizens learned about this project throughout its duration. However it was not accessible to everyone due to some people's limited mobility and transportation needs. An outreach program to visit care homes would have been a good addition to the project.

Many senior citizens enjoyed the performances that were a part of the workshops; all workshops began with a duet steelband performance. The band performed songs from their era and they all reported feeling happier after these sessions. Some older people attended just for the performance and we learned that many senior citizens would welcome having a performance only event.



Marcia, 65 from Greenford

"I thoroughly enjoyed a well attended lesson in learning to play pans. The lesson was well taught and understanding was easy. I am looking forward to the next lesson"

Comments

"The performances were beautiful and I loved the Beatles songs. We all sang along and had a great time. I didn't participate every week due to my bad back but I attended many sessions to enjoy the music. Many of us got to sit down and play which was also great and unexpected as I only ever see people standing when they play" Joseph, 68 from Northolt

"The delivery was outstanding and learning the history of this instrument was so lovely. I really felt a part of something doing this. I look forward to doing it again" Rachel, 66 from Northolt

"It was fun to watch as well" Joanna, 65 from West Ealing

"I thoroughly enjoyed a well attended lesson in learning to play the pans. The lesson was well taught and understanding was easy. I am looking forward to the next lesson. Excellent" Marcia, 65 from Greenford

"Good teacher, learnt more than I expected in one lesson, can't wait to come back next week" Steven, 67 from Hanwell

Fabulous event, fantastic tutor and great level of engagement. Helped me reconnect with my Caribbean culture, just awesome. Anonymous male, 73 from Southall

"I had a wonderful time this afternoon, so much better than I thought, thank you" Anonymous female, 75 from Southall

Case study



Mary, 72 from Ealing

"It was so much fun and it was so lovely to have a sense of purpose each week"

Mary is 72 and lives in the London Borough of Ealing. Her 3 older siblings have passed away. 2 of her children now live in Australia and her youngest daughter in London, East Ham. During the pandemic Mary was not able to see her daughter and friends for a long time and was supported by a local team. Mary said she experienced extreme anxiety and loneliness during this time.

Every year Mary and a couple friends attend the annual Northolt High senior citizens Christmas party that was not held during 2020 and 2021. In 2021 Northolt High School sent a Christmas letter and chocolates to all their members that usually attend. Mary said this was the highlight of her year, she felt she wasn't forgotten and left a heartfelt voice message to the headteacher of the school, also informing them one of her friends had passed away from covid.

In 2022 Mary said she was delighted to learn about the opportunity to take part in a steel pan music workshop leading up to the annual Christmas event. Although very anxious to attend she pushed herself to go to the first session and had her daughter bring her.

Mary said she doesn't know if she has ever done something so enjoyable. *"The tuition was fantastic,"* she said, *"we learned an entire song and I do not have any prior music experience. It was so much fun and it was so lovely to have a sense of purpose each week."* By the 2nd session Mary made her own transportation arrangement and said she felt very independent travelling alone and made friends at the sessions and they often travelled together.

Mary performed at the Christmas event and said it was a marvellous experience and for such a large audience. She felt very good within herself that she could learn a new skill. Mary stays in contact with Steel Pan Trust and we recently learned that she and 3 others that learned to play steel pan have now joined some other activities for senior citizens in the London Borough of Ealing.

Support needed

Advice and guidance

Support needed

Ensure ongoing funding to give the project sustainability and elderly people confidence that they can take part in the following year.

Guaranteeing a local/community event for participants to showcase the new skills they have learned for a bigger sense of achievement.

An outreach program for care homes to also enjoy listening to steel pan music and taking part in music workshops. Playing music brings people together. Rhythm play can stimulate the mind and keeps seniors active and engaged. Music can also improve memory and concentration for seniors. Music makes us feel better. When you hear a long-time favourite song, it can spark memories that make you feel good. For seniors, listening to their favourite songs is a great way to exercise their minds and bring back fond memories. This is also why music is wonderful for treating depression.

Advice and guidance

Identify funders that support projects for elderly people.

The project can be used to reduce social isolation and used as referrals for GP's, Social Prescribers, Care Co-Ordinators and Council departments as appropriate to support people to participate in community activity, either as an alternative to, or as complementary support to health and social care support.

Collaborating with other organisations for elderly people is crucial for the sustainability of this project. Plan services jointly with colleagues in Adult Social Care, local NHS, and local NGOs—Meeting the needs of an aging population is already the biggest challenge facing public services in many parts of the country and within every local authority boundary there will be partnerships and working groups assessing these needs, and co-ordinating action. Library services are able to direct staff energy and financial resources at the most important issues, when they begin with discussions with working groups and partnerships focused on

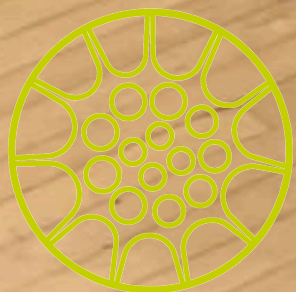


adult social care.

Work with individual care home managers—Although the care home market may well go through major changes in the coming decades (growth, segmentation, entirely new models), that does not alter the fact that today's care home managers require a reliable supply of quality assured enrichment activities for their residents. This makes care home managers important partners, and potentially purchasers of services they perceive as filling gaps to culture and knowledge, and reminiscence based on heritage collections.

Learning of transportation networks for elderly people to increase accessibility and participation.

The success of this project can be emulated in other boroughs. Arts Council England did a survey named Stand By Me; The contribution of public libraries to the well-being of older people. It recommended libraries for a number of reasons with several recommendations as to why it is a great venue for engaging elderly people and hosting community activities to improve well-being and has been tested in other areas in the UK.



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