

SMALL GRANTS CASE STUDY



PROGRAMME

CR/CD Small Grants Scheme

ORGANISATION

Imagine! Belfast

PROJECT NAME

Imagine! Belfast Festival 2020

LOCATION

Belfast & online

COUNCIL AREA

Belfast City Council

GRANT AWARD

£5,000

OVERVIEW

The Imagine! Belfast Festival of Ideas & Politics took place during 25-27 March with a packed programme of 41 webcasts examining political and cultural issues, including the threats presented by COVID-19. Forced to withdraw over 90 public events because of the pandemic, Northern Ireland's first online festival went virtual with broadcasts from 1 PM to 9 PM each day. The 6th annual festival had been quickly re-organised as a digital offering and was free to view on the festival website.

Now in its 6th year, the festival has quickly become one of the largest offerings of its kind which has effectively engaged significant and diverse sections of the community in discussion on cultural diversity and good relations issues. Events focus on dealing with the past, anti-racism, cultural diversity and reconciliation issues through performances, debates, discussions and workshops.



T:BUC THEME, AREA OF WORK AND DELIVERY METHOD

1. Key Priority 4: Our Cultural Expression
2. Challenging Sectarianism/Racism & Commemoration
3. Reconciliation Online Festival & Public Debate

IMPACT

- Festival attendees: 12,102 website users during March 2020 with 11,963 new users and 66,964 page views.
- Analytics provided insight into the audience, with a reach that was considerably larger in 2020 than 2019. A more diverse audience was recorded and an increase in a younger viewership on the website and social media platforms.
- 19% of online consumers came from outside Northern Ireland, compared to 10% who attended the public events last year.
- Originally 92 events had been planned between during 25-31 March 2020 across Belfast. Due to COVID-19, 41 events were held online between 27-29 March 2020, via the website, YouTube and Facebook live functions.
- 71% of people answered yes to the question "after attending the festival, would you be more likely to attend other politics-related events" and 29% stated they felt the same way about attending other events of this type; 0% said they were less likely.

“

Life has suddenly become very different and unnerving. Almost everything about our daily lives has changed almost overnight – most notably our ability to participate in, and enjoy, live events together. As a result, we've had to react quickly to rapidly unfolding events and take an entirely new approach to the Imagine! Festival.

**Peter
O'Neill**
Festival
Director

”