



The TALKING SHOP Project

This project could not have been completed without the help of the following people. Thank you for working with us to make 'Talking Shop' a reality.

- Belfast City Council Good Relations**
- Donegall Pass Women's Group**
- South Belfast Alternatives**
- Markets Community Centre Women's Group**
- Henri Mohammed BCC**
- Ballynafeigh Community Development Association**



9 Visits
3 Shops
3 Cultures

Shop Visits > Discussion > Food > more Discussion



Belfast City Council

SHOPS THAT TOOK PART

HUI BAI JIA
23-29 Donegall Pass,
Belfast BT7 1DQ



LEE FOODS
98-108 Donegall Pass,
Belfast BT7 1BX

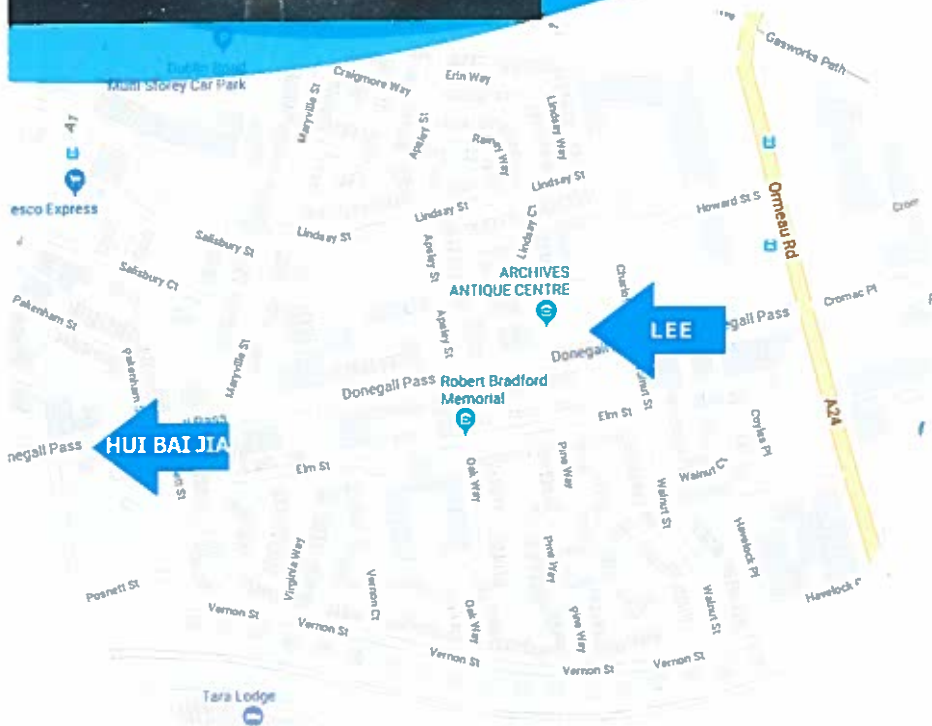


What we wanted to achieve

Belfast is the most racially diverse area of NI, with South Belfast having most BMEs. There has been an increase in the ethnic food market in the UK, demonstrated by the provenance of ethnic food shops all over Belfast and 'ethnic food' sections now found in the major supermarkets. We wanted to bring local people into these spaces to increase cultural diversity.

Research

CWA interviewed the 3 proposed ethnic shop-visit sites of the project (Syleti Bazaar, Polita and Lee Supermarket) about their footfall's ethnic makeup. Only between 5-15% of people frequenting these shops are from local indigenous communities.





The Talking Shop Project

promotes the positive expression of cultural identity through the common experience of food (and shopping!). It is accessible for everyone (we all eat). Going to the shops is shared the experience by all. Comparing and contrasting with what we know is a natural response to a new setting.

Eating food together is a recognisable commonality between all peoples are cultures, little wonder we have metaphors like 'breaking bread' and 'peace meal', words often associated with building peaceful relations. The evidence of an increasing ethnic food industry is proved by mainstream supermarket chains now providing ethnic food aisles and by many ethnic foods shops springing up all over Belfast.

This cultural expression is to be welcomed and for the BME communities represented in this project, they have been given a wonderful opportunity to introduce their food culture to a new audience. They have had a great platform to promote a diverse Belfast of not only new sights and sounds but also diverse tastes.



By taking local groups into these spaces We have promoted diversity, allow greater sharing and help increase community cohesion.

We have 'decreased the distance of difference' by using food as a tool to challenge stereotypes, increase healthy curiosity and increase respect between groups. This have increased the sharing potential of these spaces and break down the invisible barriers in people's minds.

Results:

- SOME PARTICIPANTS BOUGHT FOOD DURING THE VISIT
- REVISITED THE SHOP AFTERWARDS
- EXPRESSED KEENNESS FOR MORE CLASSES AROUND COOKING
- CONFESSED THE NEED TO GET OVER THE HURDLE OF TRYING SOMETHING NEW
- THE VISITS ALLOWED LOCAL PEOPLE TO TOUCH THE 'EVERYDAY LIVES OF THE BMES AROUND THEM'





Aims:

'Talking Shop' Shop has:

- **helped reduce tensions** by increasing awareness of 'the others' in our local communities and lower levels of ignorance about other customs and cuisine.

- **developed confidence** in local groups to enter spaces that they may have felt excluded from due to the [reverse] language barrier. (Signs, labels being in another language). We can use this feeling of 'unfamiliarity and strangeness' to help local communities understand the language barrier and feelings of isolation BME communities may face on a daily basis and thus, create greater empathy, inclusion and interdependence- we may all eat different food, but we are all neighbours.

- **has better informed** our participants of the cultures involved but will empower them to share their new-found knowledge with other local people- their friends and family.



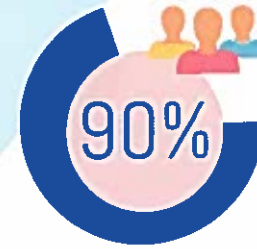
DIET

In terms of diet, the Chinese have very definite customs of their own concerning food, its preparations, its service and the manner in which it is eaten. The older generation held the belief that rice is the only form of staple food which can provide energy and vitality. Most Chinese people believe in the concept of 'Yin' and 'Yang' the balance of 'cold and hot' energies in the human body. Diet plays an important part in maintaining the individual's normal health balance and in correcting imbalances, as different foods are believed to have either 'heating', 'cooling' or 'neutral' properties.



It was like traveling from one world to another'

BEFORE



Have not ever been to an Ethnic Shop in their neighbourhood



Are not likely to shop in an ethnic shop

AFTER



Likely to make a return visit to an ethnic shop





CWA who are we?

The history of the Chinese Community in Northern Ireland traces its roots to the early 1960s, when the first Chinese arrived here. Since this period their numbers have increased progressively.

The Chinese community is one of the largest oldest minority ethnic community in NI; with the first Chinese members coming to NI in the 60s. The Chinese community is now into the 3rd and 4th generation in Northern Ireland.

In 1986, in recognition for the need to access services and to create a bridge between the Chinese community and government departments and statutory bodies, CCC set up the Chinese Welfare Association NI (CWA). CWA, over the past 32 years, has excelled in its efforts to support the Chinese community and has grown to become, as its motto states, 'the voice and ears of the community'.

CWA has also helped to improve relations between the local Chinese and indigenous communities. In doing so, it has aided Chinese people to become active citizens and integral members of the wider community in Northern Ireland.

In 2011, the formal launch of the Chinese Resource Centre managed by Chinese Welfare Association was a great achievement for the Chinese community.



POLITA
29 Ravenhill Rd,
Belfast BT6 8DP



BANGLA BAZAR
175-177 Ormeau Rd,
Belfast BT7 1SQ

