

# T:buc

Changing for the better, together



## A LONGITUDINAL STUDY 22/23




# Introduction


This longitudinal study used primary data collection to collate the views and experiences of a cohort of 22 young people who have previously engaged in a T: BUC Camps Programme. They are the 22/23 TBUC Camps Ambassadors and are a representative group of young people who have benefited from the Camps experience.




The study aimed to investigate:



Improve our understanding of the impact T: BUC Camps programme on young people, focusing on attitudinal change



(a) Identify strengths, and (b) possible areas for development of the T: BUC Camps programme



Enhance participation and opportunities for young people and to contribute to the ongoing developments of the T: BUC Camps Programme

# Context:

The Together: Building a United Community (T: BUC) Strategy, published May 2013, is a key strategy in developing and supporting good relations across all sections of our society in Northern Ireland. The T: BUC Camps programme is one of the seven headline actions of the T: BUC Strategy, providing opportunities for young people aged 9-25 years old from all communities within Northern Ireland to come together, have fun, engage in new experiences, build long term relationships with others, through a programme of good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The T:BUC Camps Ambassadors programme is an opportunity for young people aged 15+ to enhance their understanding of Good Relations, develop new skills and act as an advocate and voice for other young people across Northern Ireland. They help shape the operational and strategic future of the Programme. The programme is delivered and managed by the Education Authority Youth Service and is open to all young people of the appropriate age range who have previously been a participant of a T:BUC Camps Programme. Participants are selected for the programme based on a competitive recruitment process that ensures all 11 local councils are represented.

This study provided insight into the developmental trajectories and changes that have occurred in individual young people who participated in T: BUC Camps and are now participating in the T: BUC Ambassadors programme.

# Methodologies

Three qualitative primary research methods were used to gather young people's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and feedback:

- 1 Briefing session to inform group of process and engage with them on methodologies and themes
- 2 Surveying via Microsoft Forms
- 3 A focus group facilitated via Microsoft Teams

## Who engaged?

18 Young People participated in the initial youth work style briefing session.



22 Young people participated in the survey



19 Young people participated in the focus group



# Findings and Results

## Areas of enquiry:

### 1. Reflections on the impact of the T: BUC Camps Programme on young people:

The group were very positive in their reflections on how participating in a T:BUC Camps Programme directly impacted their knowledge base and understanding of good relations. Findings evidence that young people had increased knowledge and understanding of Good Relations and other religions/ cultures, and that they experienced significant positive attitudinal change in terms of how they viewed people of other religions.

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20% of participating young people were aware of the term Good Relations before participating in a T: BUC camps programme, by post-camp stage 100% of participating young people felt confident in explaining the term Good Relations to their friends and family.

Many of the group also expressed that participating in a T:BUC Camps Programme directly impacted on their self-esteem and confidence. Young people reflected that T: BUC Camps created a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space. During a discussion, all participants agreed that the T: BUC Camps provided safe spaces for participation.

# Findings and Results cont.

*“People felt more confident to be themselves, everyone was confident in showing who they were as they felt safe that they wouldn’t be judged and when we had an open mic everyone got up to perform knowing it was a safe environment. This had a major impact on young people as they experienced performing to a crowd and now a lot of them perform at different events knowing that T: BUC camps helped their confidence massively”*



*“I think that the Programme has made a lot of people that have taken part in it more empathetic to others and it has helped lots of people to develop themselves and become more confident”*

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Young people voiced that participating in a T: BUC programme united their communities and impacted their level of social awareness. They recognised that T: BUC create opportunities for positive attitudinal change in terms of how they viewed people of other religions and community backgrounds.



*“I understand the impact of the T: BUC programme from my personal experience as a young leader, T: BUC has helped me grow and discover new things such as cultures, celebrations and understanding different communities in certain perspectives. This programme is to unite communities and bring us young people together to have our voices heard in a positive way”.*

*“I understand the impact that T: BUC Camps Programme can have on young people, particularly in terms of attitudinal change. T: BUC Camps Programme is an initiative designed to bring together young people from different backgrounds, cultures, and religions in Northern Ireland, and provide them with a safe and inclusive environment to learn, interact, and build relationships with one another. I also believe T: BUC Camps can help to develop a good attitude in young people which creates less prejudice in a social area”*

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Young people voiced that T: BUC was an enjoyable experience, and that having fun was central to the T: BUC camps experience, directly impacting young people’s levels of engagement in structured and intentional youth work.

*“I found that the T: BUC camps had a huge impact on young people. Giving them a chance to meet new people, learn about different cultures and where they live while also having fun too.”*

*“T: BUC camps have made a huge impact on me and many others, I have noticed it in myself and those around my I feel as though it had improved everyone’s attitudes positively, some people very drastically as well. I noticed some of my peers and the participants are a lot more open to other religions and backgrounds and a lot more open minded and considerate towards others*

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## 1. a) Identified strengths of the T: BUC Camps programme:

Young people voiced that providing spaces for young people to explore other cultures and beliefs was a major strength of the T: BUC Camps Programme, allowing young people to build meaningful relationships, resulting in lifelong friendships.

*“The strengths of the programme were that it provided a place for young people to grow friendships and to hang around with someone that didn’t come from your background.”*

Findings demonstrated that a major strength of the programme was diversity and that T: BUC provided all young people equal opportunities regardless of their religious or cultural background.

# Findings and Results cont.



*“[A strength of the T: BUC programme was] bringing together young people from all areas, backgrounds and religions, I feel this gave young people more of an understanding of the people around them and majorly decrease negative attitudes they gave towards these other young people from surrounding communities, these negative attitudes usually the result of false stereotypes”*

Findings evidenced that a major strength of the T: BUC camps programme was that the Camps were of a high quality, with a wide range of opportunities, good quality experiences and activities allowing young people to enjoy their time participating in the programme and having fun with others.

*“A big strength was that there was something for everybody to do and have fun with. While a lot of people performed in the music section there was also a media team that learnt about photography and film and graphic design. This created a lot of new talents that people began to love and things that they wouldn't normally be exposed to.”*

*“The programme was constantly enjoyable, and everyone got involved every time. We were always busy doing something whether it was day trips away, social action projects or guest speakers. Everyone had so much fun and learnt a lot.”*

*“One of the strengths of the T: BUC Camps Programme when I did it would be emphasis on interactive and experiential learning. By engaging in activities that promote collaboration, teamwork, and communication, participants can learn important skills which benefited everyone in all areas of their lives. Furthermore, the T: BUC Camps Programme provided us with a unique opportunity to learn from individuals we might not have otherwise met and it also helped to build my confidence and create a strong role of leadership that has helped throughout many of the things that participate in at school”*

Young people also expressed a strong element of the T: BUC Camps programme was that negative attitudes of young people in wider communities decreased and that the Camps were inclusive of all young people offering a constructive learning experience and that participants could develop skills in communicating with wider society.

*“The strength of my programme was that everyone was treated equally and that everyone was given many opportunities to challenge themselves past their comfort zone in order for them to grow as a person and make new lifelong friends”.*

*“The biggest strength is the quality of people the camp attracted, as in all of us wanted to learn about each other, we all wanted to grow together, so being surrounded by likeminded people is probably the biggest strength. Other strengths are the range of types of people who attended, the quality of the camps etc”.*

# Findings and Results cont.

*“The strengths of this programme were meeting new people and learning how to understand others points of views such as their culture and beliefs. I have strengths in my communication skills as I feel that I work well with others from different backgrounds by communicating with them to get to know more about them.”*

*“The programme was constantly enjoyable, and everyone got involved every time. We were always busy doing something whether it was day trips away, social action projects or guest speakers. Everyone had so much fun and learnt a lot.”*

The findings highlighted that young people viewed the educational element of the T: BUC Camps programme as a strength. Voicing that they favoured topical learning opportunities.

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*“I think the strengths would have been how T: BUC ensured to involve so many different communities and cultures and mingle them all together in such a beautiful way. I was very happy with how well everyone ended up getting along and I was very impressed with some of the bonds I seen forming.”*

## **b) Identify the possible areas for development:**

Young people expressed that they often didn't know that there were other T: BUC Camps in proximity of their local area, therefore an area for development could be in local networking and more collaborative working. They also highlighted that the reach of the Programme could be expanded, particularly to schools, as many of their schools were not participating.

Young people discussed that to further develop the T: BUC programme more Camps in the Community type days would allow for groups to come together, get to know each other, share, and develop ideas for their local programmes.

*“... I feel advertisement of the programme should be developed to open more opportunities to more young people.”*

*“I wish I had had been involved in TBUC at an earlier age, but I wasn't aware of it. It should be targeted to young groups, starting at primary school level to help young people make friends when moving to different secondary schools.”*

*“I feel that's TBUC could visit schools and make young people more aware of them as well as advertising on social media.”*

*“I feel like TBUC need to go into school to give talks and give out forms to sign up for TBUC. They should also become more active on social media where they show what TBUC is all about through interviews videos photos etc.”*

# Findings and Results cont.

The group also highlighted how social media could be used more to promote the achievements of Camps but also in promoting the opportunities to participate in one.

Young people suggested that for the programme should be more inclusive of people from other religious and community backgrounds and less focus on achieving a variance with 2 main communities here. The young people in the focus group recognised that although good relations across CNR & PUL communities is still prevalent for young people in Northern Ireland, young people also recognised that Northern Ireland is an evolving space with many different people, from a range of cultures, religious backgrounds, and ethnicities, suggesting that the T: BUC Strategy should take this into considerations to enhance development of the programme.



*“The programmes could be more open with other religions as well”*

*“Get more different cultures involved and bring everyone together”*

*“More trips that help with learning about other religions around our localised areas”*

*“More diverse activities and more training and knowledge for staff to deliver workshops and activities relating to that. We did dance and music from African culture which was very interesting.”*

Furthermore, young people expressed that to develop the T: BUC Camps Programme further, Good Relations training for Camps staff would help deliver more inclusive workshops and activities relating to Good Relations.



*“The duration of the PowerPoint presentation was too long; a template could be given to staff to prevent this.”*

*“more training and knowledge for staff to deliver workshops and match activities that relate back to the workshops”*

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# Findings and Results cont.

## 3. To enhance participation and opportunities for young people and to contribute to the ongoing developments of the T: BUC Camps Programme:

Young people expressed that to enhance participation and opportunities for young people, good use of technology such as social media should be considered to promote the T: BUC Camps strategy and opportunities available to young people. The group also felt strongly that there should be more opportunities and emphasis for co-design in local Camps. They felt their voice was not always valued in the Camps and Camps Staff could do more to ensure authentic participation and allow them the space to shape their Camps.

*“Let [young people] have a little bit more of a say in what they do for the TBUC camp.”*

The young people felt there was a missed opportunity for the wider TBUC strategy to have a youth advisory panel, connecting the headline actions together, ensuring the voice of young people was represented.



*“T: BUC Programme could have a greater impact on youth by establishing a youth advisory board, expanding outreach and engagement efforts, and incorporating more leadership development opportunities for young people. This would involve regular meetings, consultations, and surveys with young people, working with schools and community groups to identify and support participation, and providing mentorship and training programmes to develop leadership skills.”*

They also voiced that they would prefer the opportunity to achieve accreditation through their Camps experience, and this would appeal to many of their peers.

*“More exciting programs and useful qualifications for career paths... could bring in more people.”*



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The group also expressed that this study was a beneficial opportunity to give their feedback and that it made them feel that their voice was heard, they felt more regular formal consultation with young people would positively inform and prove beneficial to the ongoing development of the T: BUC Strategy and the TBUC Camps Programme.

# Conclusions of Findings

In conclusion, this study indicates that the T: BUC Camps Programme has a profound impact on young people, particularly in the case of attitudinal change and developing interpersonal skills. After participating in a T: BUC Camps programme young people have increased knowledge and understanding of Good Relations and other religions/ cultures in Northern Irish society than that of their own. This study indicates that the safe, inclusive space provided by the T: BUC camps programme directly impacts the levels confidence and self-esteem of young people and that the level of enjoyment and quality of the programming directly impacts young people's engagement in structured and intentional youth work.

Providing a safe space for young people to explore other cultures and beliefs was a major strength of the T: BUC Camp Programme. Findings also evidenced that the level of diversity, the wide range of opportunities and good quality experiences and activities were major strengths of the T: BUC Camps programme.

For the Camps to develop effectively, increased public relations and advertisement should be considered. Findings proposed that the framework for people's backgrounds and how these inform the make-up of the Camps, should be developed to allow for a more inclusive group of people from other religious backgrounds that that of PUL/ CNR. The group also recommended an increase in local connections and networking would prove effective in the development of the T: BUC camps Programme and Good Relations training for staff would help deliver more inclusive workshops and activities relating to Good Relations.

Findings highlight that to enhance participation and opportunities for young people, good use of technology such as social media should be considered, and young people should have more opportunities to co-design local Camps, becoming more involved in the process of the T: BUC Strategy and going forward more frequent and structured consultations with the T: BUC Ambassadors would ensure that their voice is represented in shape and design of the Programme.

## Recommendations

1 - Results of the study are shared with partners and those involved in the review of the TBUC strategy.

2 - Meeting with partners regarding the use of social media and how this could be enhanced.

3- EA TBUC team to review current annual plans around good relations training, local networking and sharing of good practice events and monitoring visits, to ensure they address some of the young people's areas for development.

