

SMALL WORLDS

WHAT ARE 'SMALL WORLDS' WORKSHOPS?

'Small Worlds' are cafe-style events in which people circulate around tables hosted by volunteers from different nationalities. The workshops introduce a taste of the diversity that exists in NI and provide safe spaces in which participants can meaningfully begin to engage with those from different backgrounds and other parts of the world. For many participants, these are experiences that open up a fresh perspective. The conversations take place in a safe and semi-structured setting that is carefully managed by a facilitator.



photo: Chris Flack @ PunksatonyPhil.com

Small Worlds: a glimpse into real lives including:

- Growing up in a different part of the world
- Coming from a different culture or religious background
- Coming from a different environment or climate
- Living far away from your family / friends
- Challenges of being new to NI
- Different reasons for moving to NI
- Ways in which newcomers contribute to make NI a better place to live

Participating in 'Small Worlds' workshops:

- Helps overcome fear/mistrust of those seen as 'different'
- Brings the similarities between people to light
- Addresses misunderstandings / myths
- Promotes the benefits to NI of inward migration
- Increases awareness and openness towards NI's ethnic diversity
- Increases respect and trust

HOW DO THEY WORK?

'Table hosts' from a variety of different countries each host a table at which a small group (4-6 people) are seated for 15-20 minutes. This starts with a short introduction by the host themselves, which then opens into a more general question and answer session about the host's experience of living in both their own country of origin and also in Belfast. At the end of each short period, participants then move on to meet another table host and visit another 'Small World' and so the process continues until the workshop comes to an end.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The most diverse wards in NI are located in South Belfast where it is estimated that 10% of the population do not have English as a first language. By harnessing the ethnic diversity, the experience and the enthusiasm of Belfast Friendship Club (BFC) members who are keen to take part, we 'export' our Small Worlds workshops to other parts of NI where there is less ethnic diversity in order to provide a taste of 'difference'.

WHERE DO THEY HAPPEN?

We come to you! By agreement, groups provide the setting, the participants and any refreshments and we will do the rest, bringing the table hosts and the facilitator to you. Depending on the age of the audience members, Small Worlds workshops typically last between 1.5 - 2 hours and involve 20-25 participants and 4 table hosts.

WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?

The first 'Small Worlds' workshop was held in December 2009 within Belfast Friendship Club (www.belfastfriendshipclub.org), which is based in South Belfast. Since then, workshops have been run in a wide variety of settings and with very different audiences. These include community and youth groups, faith-based groups, business leaders, youth leaders and school children at both primary and post-primary level. Our participant feedback indicates how well these workshops have been received over the past 5 years!

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS SAY?

"Inspiring and thought provoking"

"Really interesting conversations with some beautiful people"

"Absolutely amazing – informative and challenging. Thank you."

"Great network to get young people involved with"

"Heart-warming, hard-hitting, genuine and touching experience"

"Mind blowing"



HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE? WHAT DO THEY COST?

Although we can provide some workshops for free, it may be necessary to make a charge. We are keen to accommodate as many groups as we can over 2013/14 so please get in touch with us to explore the possibilities. We look forward to hearing from you!

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