

Making connections and reaching new people: insights from

INCLUDE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



INCLUDE
Inclusion Focus Programme



The INCLUDE groups used activity that was designed to reach new people and organisations as part of a strategy to widen the diversity of their groups.

CREATING MUSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT CONNECT

SHORT TERM

All four groups planned musical activities with the aim of reaching new people and raising awareness across their whole communities. Large-scale events required money and effort to organise but had the potential to make an impact if the follow-up was right.



Luton Choral Society's [Make Music Day concert](#) featured four music groups of different genres. 61% of the audience had not been to one of their concerts before and the relationships built with the other groups led to a successful joint Christmas concert.

To connect with people in a different part of their town, **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** organised informal performances in a health centre, community centre and café. They handed out 110 vouchers for upcoming concerts, 3 of which were used. They learnt more about their community

and will continue to publicise their concerts in these new places.

Luton Choral Society's 'Community Singing Day': a varied programme of songs to suit new and experienced choral singers was more successful than previous events only designed for confident singers. They shared recordings of the songs in advance so there was less of a barrier for people who did not read sheet music.

You could try...

- Handing out ‘special offer’ vouchers (free tickets, discount codes) at community events or offering concert tickets as raffle prizes to other organisations.
- Planning something new that connects with your community for [Make Music Day](#).
- Collaborating with ensembles of different genres for concerts, workshops, etc.
- Varying your repertoire for your next ‘Come and Sing’ or ‘Come and Play’ event.
- Considering how to remove musical barriers people may experience, e.g. sharing practice tracks, recordings, or scores before a participatory event.

CONNECTING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

LONG TERM



All four groups hosted [discussion events about access and inclusion](#) for other music groups in their area. Being the lead in creating a network has opened opportunities for the groups and started conversations about working together that we hope will develop over years.

Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society hosted a meeting for music groups in North Lincolnshire which led to creating a mailing list for sharing events and a [‘Music Groups in](#)

[North Lincolnshire 2024’](#) booklet to distribute in community spaces. They connected with other organisations too, inviting sixth-form students to perform at Make Music Day and building a relationship with the North Lincolnshire Music Hub (which required perseverance!).

“The new Music Engagement Officer is extremely enthusiastic to work with us. She sees us as a ‘lead’ in the music societies. - SNLCS”

You could try...

- Using Making Music’s [Group Finder tool](#) to find out about other local groups.
- Hosting a networking event for music groups in your area.
- Researching your [Music Hub](#) and contacting their Music Engagement Officer.

WORKING TO INCLUDE A SPECIFIC GROUP OF PEOPLE

LONG TERM

To widen the diversity of people in their group, one of the things our groups tried was targeting those they knew are not currently being included. This is a long-term aim that takes time, but making use of your community and existing contacts is a good place to start.

They used our [Census Comparison Survey](#) to understand how the demographic make-up of their group compared to their community and to start conversations about who was missing. It also gave **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** data they could use when applying for grants and communicating with the Music Hub.

Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society’s concert featuring the young performers of the Doncaster Youth Jazz Orchestra attracted a younger audience as performers brought their friends and family. They often programme young professional artists, partly so that local young people can see themselves represented on stage.



Luton Choral Society worked with a local Eastern European community centre to translate posters to Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian and invited the Director of the centre to speak at their Community Singing Day. This didn't result in immediate changes but was the start of using community resources and networks to build long-term relationships.

Great Bowden Recital Trust ran an eight-week '[Men Sing for Movember](#)' project that engaged 30 men and resulted in 7 joining their Community

Choir. Creating a space that's specifically designed for a target group helps them to know that they are welcome and that they can try something new with similar people.

You could try...

- Using the [Census Comparison Survey](#) to understand the demographics of your group.
- Organising a [short-term project](#) to engage with a specific group of people.
- Talking to your existing connections (members, audience, friends and family etc.) to see if they can connect you with your target group.
- Researching your local area to find out what community resources exist already (e.g. community centres, places of worship, clubs).
- Booking performers or soloists that reflect the diversity of the audience/membership you're aiming for.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR CONNECTION

SHORT TERM

The groups used social media as a tool for creating a more diverse digital community, which had an impact on their participation and audience attendance.

OutSingCancer Choir observed that videos of the choir performing were effective: a recording of '[O Holy Night](#)' gained over 1,000 views.

Luton Choral Society included links to accessibility information in paid Facebook adverts alongside other details about concerts.

Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society used Facebook groups for guitar societies in a 50-mile radius to advertise a concert by guitarist Xuefei Yang. They noticed an increased audience and younger demographic of people attending this concert.

You could try...

- Recording [videos](#) of your group performing to share on social media.
- Finding local or genre-specific Facebook groups to start conversations in.
- Encouraging your audiences and members to like and share your posts.
- Including links to accessibility information in your adverts.

This is one of a set of four '[Insights from INCLUDE](#)'. You can find the full set at makingmusic.org.uk/insights-from-include

Thank you to Great Bowden Recital Trust, Luton Choral Society, OutSingCancer Choir, and Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society for their participation in INCLUDE. We were supported using public funding by Arts Council England as an Investment Principles Support Organisation.