



OUR QUEER CULTURAL HERITAGE

Evaluation and Sustainability Report

Produced as part of the 3 City Partnership



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LEAP SPORTS AND THE 3 CITY PARTNERSHIP

LEAP Sports is Scotland's LGBTIQ+ sports charity working for greater inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people and against LGBTIQ+ phobia in sport and physical activity. We are committed to breaking down the structural, social and individual barriers which prevent LGBTIQ+ people from accessing, participating and excelling in sport and physical activity in Scotland and beyond.

We initiated the project with a strong sense of partnership based upon a pre-existing 3-way relationship with LiGA in Ukraine and Munich Kyiv Queer in Germany.

Munich Kyiv Queer was originally set up to support LGBTIQ+ solidarity and development through twinning Munich and Kyiv in Ukraine. The organisation works in arts, culture, sport, training and pride. They have then created another partnership with a third twin town of Edinburgh, which combines, LEAP Sports involvement in the partnership.

The three organisations and countries have previously worked together for the EMU (Edinburgh, Munich, Ukraine) Three City Sports Challenge. The challenge was set up so that LGBTIQ+ people from all three cities could beat lockdown lethargy by picking and individual sports challenge to complete from February – April 2021. A digital community space was then set up through Facebook for people to join, track their progress and connect with others. The group has 131 members who got involved.

We had originally stated that the project would run as a partnership of the three cities all running our own LGBTIQ+ cultural heritage events. Due to time constraints, it meant that the German part of the project couldn't proceed as planned and we proceeded with Scotland and Ukraine. We are hoping that future opportunities and project allow us to work together as three cities again soon.



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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

European Heritage Days are an opportunity to celebrate the shared cultural heritage of many different towns, regions, and people in Europe. European Heritage Days had the theme of Inclusive Heritage for 2021 which all participating countries are encouraged to incorporate for their events or programmes.

We centred the project and each of our events around the Inclusive Heritage theme. When creating Queer Cultural Heritage events, we wanted to have an awareness of the diversity and intersectionality of the LGBTIQ+ communities we were working with nationally and internationally.

Our planning of events and activities within the Our Queer Cultural Heritage project is hoped to extend the reach of European Heritage Days to under-represented groups and welcome individuals not normally included as participants. We wanted to create heritage events for members of the Queer communities to celebrate and reflect on their own culture.

Nationally, the project helped us to highlight and celebrate the regional and national diversity within each country and welcome all participants and share their heritage through learning and lived experience. When more people have an opportunity to tell their stories, we all benefit.

In fitting with the diverse and multicultural social and political priorities of the European Union as well as the priorities of the Council of Europe, European Heritage Days have given the opportunity for different European and Queer cultures to be celebrated, learn from each other and to expand on future opportunities. In combining both local and European partnerships, it helped us to maximise the potential for the project.

QUEER CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SPORTS

Initiated by LEAP Sports, this project had a strong starting point in relation to sport. From the perspective of the partners, there is an understanding that physical activity and sport is not something somebody just does, but it is something that is integrated into your wider identity and being. Systemic exclusion from sports environments and physical activity opportunities is a component of the history of oppression of LGBTIQ+ communities. LGBTIQ+ history and lived experience are often found in the margins and intersections of culture, sport, heritage and civil society. All partners have a proficiency of project work exploring the convergence of sport, arts, culture and heritage.

INTEREST IN EXPLORING QUEER CULTURAL HERITAGE

- What contributions do Queer people make to the cultural heritage of our local areas?
- What role has the Queer sports movement had in shaping the cultural heritage of our areas?
- Where are our contributions seen in our communities and can we tell these stories better?
- Do Queer perspectives help us take alternative views of our cultural heritage?
- How can we examine our cultural heritage in ways that support our development and influence health and wellbeing strategies?

TANGIBLE VS. INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

We explored the difference between tangible and intangible. We have some experience in cultural work but it has been on the fringes of sporting culture and sports events rather than specifically setting out to explore Queer cultural heritage with a broader lens. Our previous work has highlighted significant aspects of Queer cultural heritage that are relevant within our area of work and we've set about now trying to find a way and explore Queer cultural heritage in a deliberate, community-led and more meaningful way.

Tangible heritage

Refers to the material traces such as archaeological sites, historical monuments, artefacts and objects that are significance to a community, a nation or humanity. (Hassan, 2014)

Intangible heritage

Includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to others, such as **oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, cultural knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.** (UNESCO)

OQCH - DEVELOPING THE SCOTLAND ARM

Running an intangible event seemed the best fit to explore Queer Cultural Heritage as it reflects the methods and practices passed down and expressed through the LGBTIQ+ community for people to feel welcome and included. LGBTIQ+ culture can have its own limitations in having reduced opportunity to have a strong base or 'built' heritage.

We were inspired by a lot of community mapping work that already happened in Scotland such as Stride with Pride in Glasgow and Queering the Map in Edinburgh.

When we initially thought of doing more of a tangible project through community mapping and organised heritage walks throughout Scotland, we began to realise that not many people would have tangible markers in their local areas across Scotland or that places of cultural significance for the LGBTIQ+ community are usually rooted in nightlife or bar culture. Mainstream LGBTIQ+ culture is usually portrayed in the form of a pub or a protest. Our early community discussions happened at a point of the COVID-19 pandemic where we were still bringing people together online. The major benefit to this is that it doesn't have the same geographic limitations as a physical meeting. This helped us to realise that tangible heritage in the way we'd started to develop, tends to focus on areas of higher population density which in Scotland's case means that we'd be limiting ourselves to fewer areas and following some already regularly trodden pathways.

We wanted to create an event using an exploratory approach to focus on Roller Derby as a sport as we knew its ethos and culture as a sport was significantly interconnected to Queer experience and inclusion. We also thought it good to focus on one sport for this project and look at branching out to other sports for bigger cultural heritage projects and partnerships in future.

QUEER CONVERSATIONS LEADING TO EVENT CREATION

We co-created the event with local community members, a community grassroots venue and collaborative work with representatives from Glasgow Women's Library, The National Museum of Roller Derby and skaters from Roller Derby teams across Scotland. We also knew that Glasgow Women's Library have done previous LGBTQ+ heritage work with Stride with Pride in 2018.

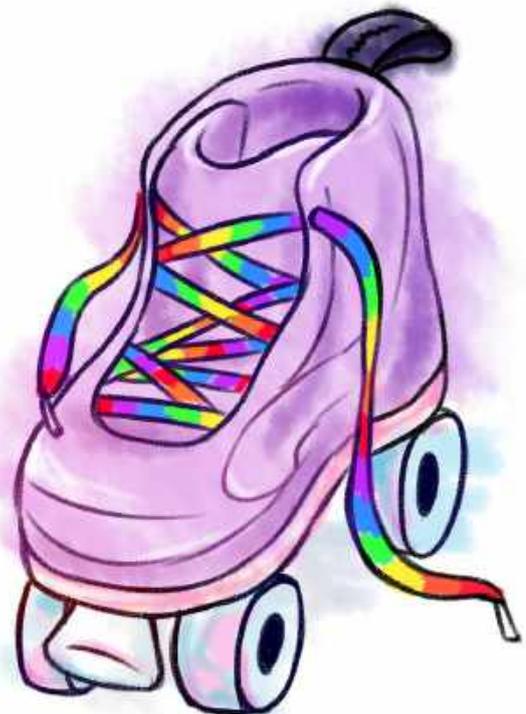
We initially had discussions with one of the Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) curators to chat through the idea for our event and whether they knew of any sporting and Queer-focused heritage material connected to Roller Derby.

We were then put in contact with artist Ellie Harrison who founded the National Museum of Roller Derby through Glasgow Women's Library's 21 Revolutions project. In 2011 to celebrate 20 years of a sole women's archive and museum GWL commissioned 21 artists and 21 writers to create new work inspired by GWL's collections. Roller Derby is an innovative and exciting sport and when seeing the parallels between the Women's Liberation Movement and the Roller Derby scene, Ellie created the museum.

We had further discussions with a volunteer curator about the types of artefacts and collections the museum had, how they archived the Queer history found and its relevancy for the sport of Roller Derby and for the LGBTQ+ community. The relevance of Queer-specific teams like Vagine Regime, skating name origins, changes in policy and uniform to be more Queer inclusive and the Queer history found on people's equipment through stickers, graffiti etc.

The National Museum of Roller Derby agreed to co-host the event with us and bring some of the museum's collection for people to see and learn more about on the day. There were limitations to visiting the NMRD collection and in borrowing a huge number of items due to the museum being closed to the public because of the pandemic. However, Glasgow Women's Library kindly collated a small number of items for us to exhibit at the event.

We also had discussions with 5 of the 13 Roller Derby teams we invited to be a part of the session to discuss what they would like to see from an event that showcased their sport and to think about what Queer representation meant for them personally and their teams.



OQCH – DEVELOPING THE UKRAINE ARM

LiGA and LGBT+ History of the Ukrainian South

The project focused on documenting of the Queer heritage in the three main cities in the South of Ukraine.

LGBT Association 'LiGA' conducted the project in the South of Ukraine, in Mykolaiv, Kherson and Odesa regions. This territory represents a unique culture of 4 million inhabitants.

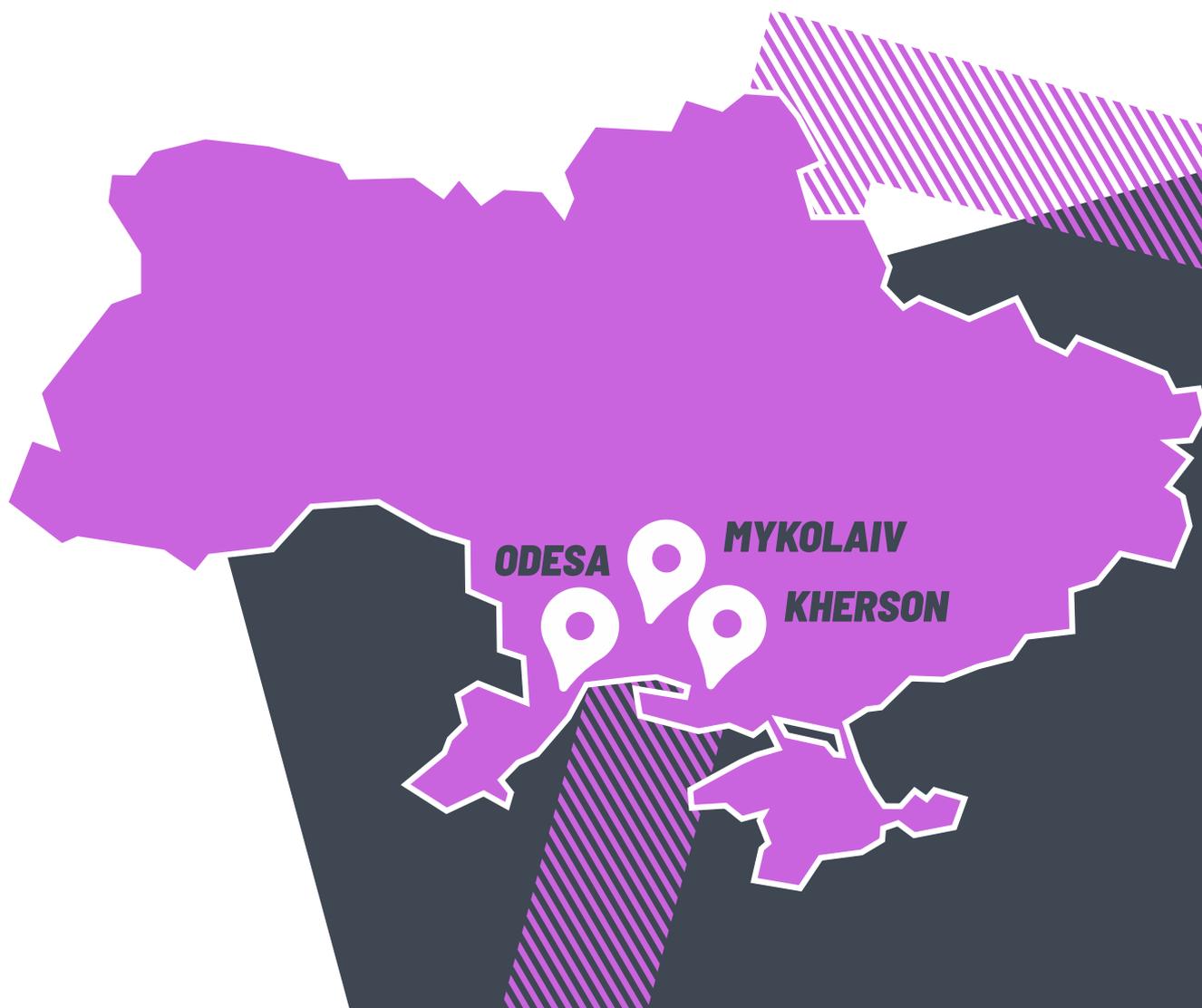
During the project for the 3 months, the organisation conducted 5 community meetings: 4 personal meetings in different cities and one regional meeting – a presentation of the results of the project for the community members.

Key Theme

The key theme of the project was the history of the pride movement and LGBT+ community in the region. The project was aimed to collecting the evidence and live stories from people who witnessed the developing of the movement, took part in this process or were involved in other ways.

Main Activities

The main activities of the project included community meetings and story writing. At the community meetings, we presented the aim and the task of the project, mobilised the community for participation, opened calls for the collecting of oral and printed evidence of the historical development of the LGBT+ movement in each city.





SCOTLAND

METHODOLOGY

We combined the Our Queer Cultural Heritage project with a pre-existing community sports festival, Festival Fortnight to fulfil three main objectives; explore the Queer cultural heritage found in Roller Derby; give attendees a chance to try skating whatever their level of ability or experience; to align with the spirit of Heritage Days and Doors Open Days by opening a new insight into cultural heritage for a brand new audience

The initial idea we tried to bring into fruition was the idea of a running a human library alongside a roller disco to marry the sporting and cultural heritage elements. Members from Scottish Roller Derby teams were going to be invited to be 'human books' and speak about their own personal experience and intersections with Roller Derby. People who came to the event, could then 'borrow' the human books to have a specific time-slot to hear their story. Due to limited space at venues and COVID-19 restrictions putting a limit on attendee numbers and social distancing considerations, the human library format wasn't a feasible option to facilitate within the timescale of the project.

We changed the session style to an interactive Q&A session with Roller Derby players alongside a roller disco at a local skate rink in Glasgow.

We also gave the spotlight to the National Museum of Roller Derby (NMRD). We felt it was important to highlight the already exhibited work and artefacts documenting the culture and heritage of Roller Derby. The museum also had a stall where people could see the flag created for the museum, jerseys, helmets, skates, match programs and merchandise from Vagine Regime a Queer-specific Roller Derby team. The museum has a focus on Scottish heritage which was of significance for our event so people could see the specific culture created around Scottish Roller Derby.



The intention and design of our event was to highlight an inclusive sport to the Queer and LGBTQ+ community, and illustrate how as a community, Queer people make contributions to their local and national cultural heritage. Creating an event with a cultural heritage focus, can further illustrate how that field of work can incorporate Queer experiences and perspectives to expand upon or highlight an alternative experience of culture heritage

The event also gave an opportunity to explore Queer cultural heritage through intersections of sport, women in sport and trans and non-binary inclusion.

The feedback from the event evaluation gives us an awareness of how to improve Queer experiences in health and wellbeing strategies.

ROLLER DERBY AND TEAM INVITATIONS

13 Roller Derby Teams were invited to the event; 11 local locations and 2 national teams. Skaters from Edinburgh (Auld Reekie), Glasgow (Glasgow Roller Derby) and Falkirk (Bairn City Rollers) came on the day to be part of the engagement session and support the attendees to skate during the roller disco.

Engaging with the Roller Derby teams from an early stage in the planning, helped to build excitement and added promotion for the event. Due to social distancing restrictions, the players were not able to do any sporting demonstrations but having the Q&A engagement session gave a personable side to the sport where lived experience of being involved could be focused on. The players spoke about their journeys from first wanting to be involved to where they are their now, what being involved in a Roller Derby team means to them and how influential Roller Derby is for LGBTQ+ people's experience in sport and its culture of inclusivity.

When speaking to the skaters after, we were thanked for inviting and considering the skating teams outside of the main cities and Bairn City Rollers appreciated being invited – this vindicated our earlier decision to avoid limiting the geographic ambition of the project. With all Roller Derby teams on a hiatus due to the pandemic, all the teams said they loved having the opportunity to skate again and encourage others to get involved.



TICKETS AND ATTENDANCE

The event had sold out the total of its 50 tickets by June 26th, the day before the event. Two tickets were returned with 48 sold tickets being the final total.

Direct traffic to the Eventbrite page show 208 page views. Event discovery on the platform lead to 49 views. Automated email promotion lead to 11 page interactions and the events app for Eventbrite leading to one view, giving a full total of 269 views for the whole event.

EVENT PROMOTION

We used scheduled four Facebook and Instagram posts as the primary method of promoting the event with a dedicated event page created on Facebook hosted by LEAP Sports and the National Museum of Roller Derby to help promote the event and provide direct links to the ticket page.

As we built partnerships with Roller Derby teams, they also promoted the event on their social media which broadened the event out to wider audiences. Glasgow Roller Derby promoted our event and the post was liked by 51 people. This also aligned with a big surge of ticket uptake in the days after they promoted the event on the page.

EVENT EVALUATION

Feelings about skating

When asking people their favourite thing about skating and how it makes them feel, several themes emerged.

People spoke about the sense of freedom and distraction that skating gives them and how it can help their personal wellbeing.

"Skating gives me a freedom from troubles and responsibilities."

From a group perspective, people spoke about a sense of acceptance free from fear or judgement, an experience of shared joy and a feeling of community.

"It was the first time I felt accepted in sport."

"Sharing and talking about a sport I love."

"Seeing so much joy."

"Skating with a community again after isolation."

There was a mixed bag of experience with Roller Derby players, those coming back to skating and other trying skating for the first time.

"Giving skating a try for the first time."

"Learning to skate again."

"Getting to put on skates after a long lockdown."

The global pandemic created a very situational contingent to how it impacted people's involvement and passion for skating, also in preventing new people from joining in the sport. The heritage event helped to bring people together of all abilities to come back to skating or try the sport out for the first time.

"(It's my) First time skating since lockdown."

"Getting to put on skates after a long lockdown."

"Skating with a community again after isolation."

Involvement in sport and skating culture

8 people said the event encouraged them to be more involved with skating and Roller Derby.

"Definitely."

"Hell yeah! I skated here for the first time and can't wait to learn more."



Several people were already involved in the sport and a derby team.

"Already pretty involved."

"It's making me miss the team!!"

"Involved, not going anywhere."

"It has reminded me how much I love it and can't wait to get back and be involved again."

In experiencing the sport at the event, some people realised the sport was potentially not for them.

"Too much of a wimp."

When asked "Do you feel Roller Derby is an Inclusive sport for Queer and LGBTIQ+ People?" 14 people responded yes or with a positive statement about Queer inclusivity.

"80% is Queer."

"Very Much 100%"

"Yes - well publicised to be inclusive as well."

"Hell yeah!"

"It's a Queer sport."

"Yes It's the most LGBT/Queer sport I've encountered."



The legacy and culture that LGBTIQ+ and Queer people have brought to Roller Derby?

When specifically focusing on culture and legacy within the sport, there were definite themes of Queer culture being integrated and celebrated within Roller Derby.

"Colour, character and camaraderie."

"Driven, created and led by members of the LGBTIQ community."

There were examples given of how Queer people and the LGBTIQ+ people helped to shape the sport and mould it to be inclusive for members of the community.

"They have shaped it."

"They created an inclusive sport."

"They have shaped the sport into what it is today. Their inclusivity has meant even the cycle and policies of the sport, preface those who play it."

The inclusive environment created in derby teams and leagues is also illustrated as people speak about feeling celebrated for their identity and sexual orientation. They also speak about finding a space where they feel like they belong and that the sport brings similar and supportive people together

"Everybody is accepted and celebrated for their unique abilities."

"They created an inclusive sport."

"Bringing people together."

"Having a sense of belonging."

There were also some points made about how 'new' the sport is which may be an indication of how derby has had less of an institutional or fixed history or culture to amend or break free, giving more opportunity for Queer culture to become intertwined within the derby. This then helps Queer people find a space within sport while also illustrating to non-Queer and LGBTQ+ people how to support and celebrate their Queer players in the sport.

"It's a new sport (relatively)."

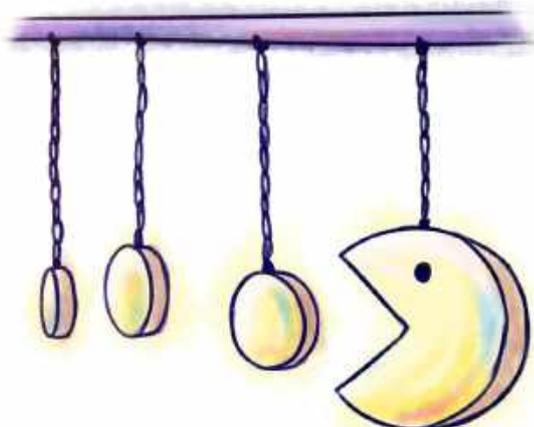
Intersectionality

Attendees were asked "Do you think Roller Derby considers people's identities and experiences without placing them into fixed categories?" When considering Roller Derby through an intersectional lens, everyone who answered agreed that the sport was diverse and welcoming to all identities.

"It has a great reputation of welcoming them all."

"It welcomes all regardless of identity."

"Yes, it is built in."



There was also an awareness that the progression of inclusion and welcoming culture, seen and experienced by those in Roller Derby, doesn't transfer across to other sporting bodies or LGBTQ+ people's experience of sport. Many sports governing bodies have structures and regulations which reward conformity and penalise individual expression, and cultures of disqualifying or denying access and opportunity to Queer, non-binary and intersex people.

"I think derby gives space to a diverse identities and experience not often allowed to exist in Sports environments."

The importance and significance of allowing people to self-identify shows the respect and inclusion given to Queer, non-binary, trans and intersex players within the sport.

"The sport is inclusive and LGBT people can self-identify and join in. I've always found I could participate, albeit, in different ways throughout my time in roller derby. I've not experienced this in any other sport."



Having this cultural awareness in the sport, to then further integrating the different needs of communities and individuals into policies and sport systems helps ensure inclusion, protection and intersectional awareness for all people involved in the sport. Having considered safe systems for Queer and LGBTIQ+ to feel welcome and included in Roller Derby, then in turn enhances the Queer culture and built heritage in the sport.

"Yes, it is built in."

Importance of cultural heritage for the LGBTIQ+ community

21 people all agreed that cultural heritage in the LGBTIQ+ and Queer community was important and more events like this was needed.

"Aye"

"110%"

"100%"

"Yes, please."

"Aye pal."

Suggestions to help us improve our future events

There were suggestions that the event could have been promoted more widely. For future events, definite consideration can be given to sharing event information across different streams and at different or related sporting and LGBTIQ+ venues.

"Promote more widely so more people know."

Another suggestion was to interconnect derby team recruitment alongside the event. At the time of running the event all derby tournaments, drives and recruitments were suspended due to the pandemic. We were also scheduling the event to coincide with Festival Fortnight 2021 and to fit within the funded time-frame. For future events, we can try to interconnect the timing and scheduling with sporting seasons and calendars to encourage more LGBTIQ+ involvement.

"Make it clear how people can get involved in the teams if interested. What are the next steps?"



THEMES FOR THE EVENT

Pandemic impact

The global pandemic had a definite impact on how people felt about coming to the event. Some people were in regular contact with LEAP in the run up to the day to check about precautions and COVID-19 measures would be in place on the day. The most frequently asked questions about the event also centred around COVID-19. We worked closely with RollerStop, the skating rink to ensure safety measures were upheld at the event and they had a brilliant policy on the different levels of restrictions and what corresponding steps the venue takes.

Living in isolation and with restrictions encouraged more people to come to the event who wouldn't have considered it previously or to come alone so that they could be involved with something with other people.

Queer culture & heritage

Having the National Museum of Roller Derby there and hearing Queer skaters' lived experiences helped to illustrate the heritage of Roller Derby and how Queer culture and lived experience shaped the sport to be inclusive, diverse and intersectional.

People spoke of Roller Derby bring a sense of belonging for Queer people and how Queer culture helped to shape Roller Derby for how it is today. The diversity illustrated in the sport has helped to ensure Queer inclusion and education has been passed down between different cycles and leagues of derby teams and across local and national teams across Scotland. That cultural heritage has then gone on to positively influence policies and organisational systems in the sport to ensure that Queer inclusion and diversity is in-built and respected within the running of the sport.

Hearing about how Roller Derby celebrates and gives space to diverse identities and experience helped LGBTQ+ people find a sport they can feel safe with and not have a fear of exclusion regardless of how they identify.

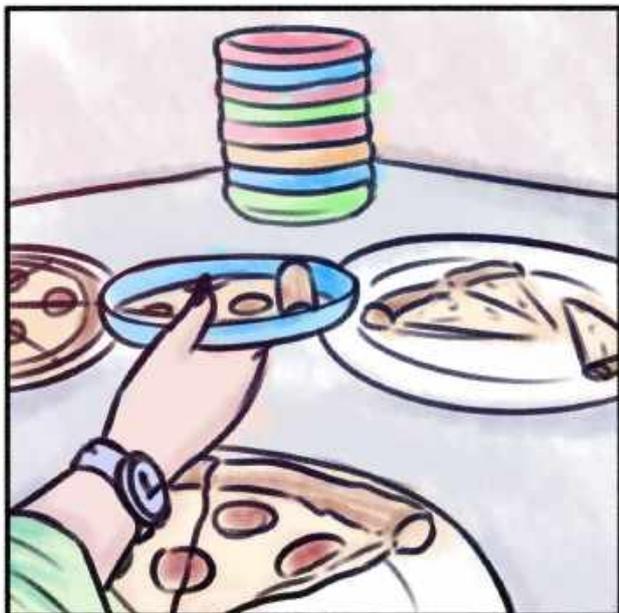
Self-identification and flexibility

One of the most inclusive elements within Roller Derby echoed by people at the event was the importance and respect given to allow people to self-identify and participate. People spoke about after coming out as trans, they were still able to participate in different ways throughout their time with their Roller Derby team and they had not experienced this with any other sport.

Community building

There was a definite sense of community building on the day with people of all abilities and experiences skating together, helping each other to skate and in engaging in discussions about Roller Derby.

There were also tangible links made between Queer culture and the heritage of Roller Derby through the involvement of the National Museum of Roller Derby (NMRD). People at the event could find out where they could learn more about the heritage in culture of inclusion in Roller Derby when visiting the museum. The museum also relies on donations so building more connections with the Queer community can also build on the Queer representation within the museum's collection.



Recent arrivals and returners

There were two distinct themes emerging with people attending the event; to be introduced to the sport and culture of Roller Derby & Skating for the first time, and those who saw an opportunity to return and come back to Roller Derby.

Inclusivity and intersectionality in sport

The learning from the event from most people was that Roller Derby has a great reputation for inclusion and diversity and welcoming to all identities. It celebrates diverse identities and intersections for all people and works on being flexible to help people to feel supported and safe to continue within the culture of the team and the sport.

The sport respects the identity and lived experience of people without trying to place them into fixed categories and further allows self-identification for players.

Seeing these cultures and practices seemed to help attendees of the event see that Roller Derby might be a potential sport for them to join and feel confident about feeling included and respected.

LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing

People spoke about how skating gave them a sense of freedom to help with their mental and physical wellbeing. Others also spoke about how the event was the first time they felt accepted in sport or they could try the sport for the first time.

There was also a significant theme of people getting a lot out of being around other people and skating together regardless of ability or experience.

There were also references to be able to come back to sport and skating after not having that avenue or outlet throughout lockdown

These themes help to illustrate why sport and physical activity can be influential for LGBTIQ+ people's wellbeing but mainstream sporting culture can feel like an exclusionary place for LGBTIQ+ people. This then shows how important it is for Queer culture and heritage to be uplifted and celebrated throughout mainstream sport and cultural events – helping more Queer people feel able to participate.



UKRAINE

MYKOLAIV CITY

On May 28th the first meeting took place in Mykolaiv city. We conducted a workshop on the Queer community history in the city. The workshop was led by the Head of the LGBT Association 'LIGA' Oleg Alyokhin. The meeting was organised open air at the community center of the LGBT Association 'LIGA'. 12 participants took part in the workshop (5 women and 7 men). The workshop hosted as well special guests: the veterans of the LGBT+ movement in Mykolaiv city. People shared their stories for documenting the first steps the community made to pave the way for the movement. The participants discussed as well how the community itself changed through the years, and specifically how the situation changed when the internet came into play.



The first LGBT+ Conference in Mykolaiv in 2004



The first lesbian community meeting in 2006

KHERSON CITY

On June 26 the second meeting was organized in Kherson city. At the workshop the representatives of the LGBT Association 'LIGA' shared the results of the first meeting and told the stories collected at the workshop in Mykolaiv. This inspired locals to share their own experience and knowledge about the Queer movement in their home city.

The workshop became a part of the Queer Forum – the annual pride event in Kherson. 15 people took part at the event (5 men, 5 women, and 5 non-binary people). Among them were young people that came specifically to listen to the LGBT+ history of the region and to know how the things were developing before they came out. The stories collected during this meeting included the history of the LGBT+ movement in Crimea, the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014. The participants recalled first LGBT+ sports competitions (soccer and volleyball) that took place in Kherson, Mykolaiv and the neighbour country Moldova.

The workshop was held in the interactive format for collecting the stories.

On July 10th the second workshop in Kherson took place. 10 people (5 women, 5 men) came to the community centre of the LGBT Association 'LIGA' to share their memories and to listen to the stories from the past. All the participants were working together and then divided into 3 groups to prepare and to share a presentation on the history of their own city from 2000 to 2014. These presentations collected some photo evidence as well.

The workshop also described the perspectives of the LGBT+ movement in the city for the future.



The first lesbian games in Kherson, soccer tournament

THE STORY

At the four community meetings in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odesa a lot of personal and organisational stories were collected along with the rare photo evidence of the historical development of the LGBT+ movement in the region. The LGBT Association 'LIGA' thoroughly collected the evidence and issued a piece on a historical development of the LGBT+ community and pride movement in the region. The Story is illustrated with the unique photo material that was collected during community meetings.

ODESA CITY

On July 30 the Head of the LGBT Association 'LIGA' conducted a workshop on the Queer history in the Odesa city. The meeting gathered 13 representatives of the community (3 women, 8 men and 2 non-binary persons). Several special guests – the veterans of the LGBT+ movement in Odesa – took part in the workshop sharing the history of the local LGBT+ community. Younger members of the community shared their experiences with the community development as well. The participants collected personal stories and as well the history of the organisational development of the few NGOs in the region, namely four organizations that were active in the city in the previous years. The workshop collected the story of the parents of LGBT+ people movement and the pride movement in the city.



The Third Lesbian, Trans and Queer Women Festival, Mykolaiv region

THE REGIONAL MEETING

The regional meeting was conducted online for a wide range of community representatives and organisations from Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odesa. At the meeting LGBT Association 'LIGA' presented the Story for the community and collected some feedback. In the consultation with the community members, it was decided to create a video based on the Story which would document the oral interviews with the veterans of the LGBT+ movement in the region. The film will be a great historical document the aim of which will be not only to show the historical development but to motivate the LGBT+ youth for the further fight for human rights for LGBT+ and community mobilisation.



The first Pride Opening Ceremony, 2009



The Community Games, volleyball tournament

THE PROJECT PRESENTATION

The Story and collected photo evidence were presented at the meeting with partners, donors and allies on August, 13 online.

Key learning

The key learning of the project was understanding of the importance of the documenting process. Collecting and sharing historical evidence is a community mobilisation and empowering tool itself. With this tool the project showed respect to those who did a lot for the LGBT+ movement development and taught some lessons to the youth. One of the key learnings was the intergenerational connection that helped to build the bridge between several generational groups and involve the youngest into the historical perspective.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

After all main activities of the project, namely community meetings, we conducted the feedback sessions to collect opinions and thoughts on the project. This feedback was mostly positive. People greeted the initiative of historical overview and were happy to be a part of it. Critical voices insisted on the modern forms of presenting the results of the project, creating video content and interviews were the most important game-changers for a short film.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS

SCOTLAND

Benefits and barriers

We ran an educational and interactive session to raise awareness of the Queer cultural heritage values within Roller Derby and to enhance people's knowledge about Queer culture and its preservation.

In our planning, we had to embrace flexible and innovative solutions to ensure we were developing a framework for a cultural heritage event that could be sustainable and adaptive for any development of future Queer Cultural Heritage events that could be expanded upon and utilised for more long-term projects of cultural heritage.

We involved local sporting venues, teams and the Scottish Queer community in our project and event to raise awareness and celebrate the Queer heritage they have, its cultural potential for both sporting and Queer communities. The event encouraged exchanges of experiences, transfers of knowledge and skills for those within the skating community and those within the LGBTIQ+ community while celebrating the intersections and culture from both groups.

Seeing how vital cultural heritage is for the Queer community can help us to integrate the practice of cultural heritage within LGBTIQ+ cultural events such as Pride, LGBT History Month, Transgender Day of Visibility, Pride Youth Games & Festival Fortnight. This can strengthen the sustainability of cultural heritage and ensure its more embedded in practice, it's highlighted at times of key cultural significance how the Queer and LGBTIQ+ community can further help people to see why cultural heritage is important and why Queer voices need to be included.

Being restricted by the pandemic to not being able to travel internationally or even in our local communities, meant we could use digital communication and use new technologies to see digital artefacts and archives when sourcing resources and info from Glasgow Women's Library. This is a sustainability factor in using digital tools for heritage conservation and interpretation.

We are very new to exploring cultural heritage and had a lack of heritage expertise in working in the field. Not working in collaboration with cultural heritage experts may mean that we have limited ourselves in knowing how to effectively preserve and present our work with heritage management in mind.

Working on a smaller pilot project may bring up barriers when creating more long-term strategic planning around cultural heritage work alongside considering the sustainability and durability for larger funded projects.

Piloting events for future cultural heritage work

When piloting a Queer Cultural Heritage project, we wanted to focus on a sport that already had a good reputation for Queer representation and expression. We then focused on repurposing the strength of the Queer heritage and culture already found in the sport to meet the needs and interests of the LGBTIQ+ community. It is hoped that by highlighting the Queer cultural heritage within both the Roller Derby and LGBTIQ+ community, it will evidence and ensure more long-term and sustainable outcomes for future Queer cultural heritage work within Scotland especially as it overlaps with sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing.

Future partnership events

There is definite potential and scope for running more partnership events on Queer cultural heritage both with specific cultural heritage organisations and with different national and international LGBTQ+ organisations. The event also showed appetite within the community for events of this nature.

UKRAINE

The main barrier we've met was a fear of homophobia and transphobia. Due to this factor many people preferred to remain quiet and not to be mentioned in the Story. The project is a great benefit for the community as it shows the progress we've made through the years and how the situation changed for the better because of community efforts.

We believe the project became a pure benefit for the community as we saw the active participation and mostly positive feedback. This is the first such project in the region and the first attempt to collect Queer pride history in Ukraine. We believe the project benefits not only the LGBT+ community but the historical perspective of Ukraine as well.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE WORK FROM NON-CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS

Queer organisations already understand the culture and know how best to engage with that community in a safe and supported way. There is already established trust in the community which can lead to more meaningful and impactful engagement.

Working in heritage work as a non-heritage organisation helps raise awareness of what Queer cultural heritage is and why it should be celebrated.

It helps to create opportunities where cultural heritage work adapts to meet the need of the LGBTIQ+ community and their interests in heritage preservation rather than a cultural heritage organisation placing an expectation on a community to achieve the outcomes they would like from the collaboration.

It therefore also increases the likelihood of cultural heritage being embedded into ongoing work, and shows how our Queer cultural heritage relates to our day to day work and agendas. This can be seen strongly in both the experiences of LiGA using cultural heritage to increase visibility and awareness in society and LEAP increasing its responsibility to highlight and preserve the influence of Queer people within sport and physical activity.

It promotes collaboration and cross field working within the equalities and cultural heritage sectors.

Obtaining cultural heritage engagement from non-heritage organisations helps to diversify and expand on the cultural heritage work and ensure underrepresented groups can be acknowledged and considered.

It highlights the importance of flexibility and intersectionality within the field of cultural heritage.

It gives the opportunity to celebrate the culture, customs and history that already exists within a community to reflect the significance and importance of those practices back to that community. It also serves to broaden more people's awareness of that cultural heritage to bring the importance of Queer or minoritised cultural heritage to mainstream attention.

SPECIFIC LEARNING FROM LiGA

As a non-heritage organisation, we struggled to combine a storyline that would reflect the cultural heritage as it is; it was not easy not to concentrate on the technical details of the Story as we tried to focus on cultural aspects. Combining the project product – the Story, we tried to keep the emotional component and to reflect the culture and attitude in the text. For this we hired a story writer that helped us with their skills as we as non-heritage organisation do not have such among our recourses.

LEARNING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was great to work alongside LiGA Ukraine and learn about Queer and LGBTIQ+ culture from the different cultural contexts from Scotland and the Ukraine. It would be interesting to expand upon this project and work with more European countries to run a similar format of events to see what different themes and learning emerged from each country. There could also be potential to run further projects for LGBTIQ+ organisations across Europe to share their learning and build a Queer Cultural Heritage collective or working group.

The project has been useful in progressing the ongoing partnership relationships and the twinning work created with Scotland, Germany and Ukraine.

We had originally hoped to link the event in with European Heritage Days & National Doors Open Days rather than Festival Fortnight but due to tight timescales and Door Open Days running throughout September 2021, we were not able to do so. In future, such a link would be useful to enhance the wider cultural heritage calendar in Scotland.

There is greater confidence in project participants now to introduce intangible heritage events into structures which have historically focused more on built and tangible heritage, and working with Doors Open Days in the future is one such potential area.

Hopefully similar heritage projects in the future won't face the same COVID-19 restrictions we faced in this current project, giving us greater scope around our methods to explore and capture Queer Cultural Heritage through intergenerational work, storytelling methods, recording conversations to build and expand on the intangible aspects of Queer heritage.

The findings of this project help highlight the assertion that health and wellbeing strategies can start from a point of respecting and regarding the lived experience and potential barriers to participation for different societal groups. Building a collaboration from this point means we can build strategies that are culturally competent, intersectional and attainable so more people feel able to be involved. Too many existing health and wellbeing strategies expect people to fit in with their expectations of identity through health issue or geography rather than working with where communities are, and the identities that are important to them.

The partner organisations, including our German colleagues, will continue to work on ways to develop Queer community relationships between our three countries to ensure that future project work continues to be co-produced and led by our community experiences.

There is space to work on longer term and more strategic work within European Cultural Heritage such as: development of a toolkit for LGBTIQ+ community engagement or Queer inclusion for future European Heritage Day events; bringing together a working group or panel to develop a more targeted or specific action plan.

SCOTLAND SPECIFIC

There was a clear gap in not being able to have a direct pathway for people at the event to sign up to heats for Roller Derby teams. Although we focused on the LGBTIQ+ cultural calendar to have the event coincide with Festival Fortnight, future events could look at incorporating key dates or seasons for sporting teams to encourage more LGBTIQ+ pathways into the sport. (Some of these aspects were out of our control due to the pandemic and all Roller Derby teams in Scotland being on a hiatus until it was safe to run sporting groups again).

We will build on our confidence in this work and take time to explore wider longer term partnerships with OurStoryScotland, Glasgow Women's Library and other cultural heritage partners nationally.

We will explore ways to extend some of the work so far, such as in the production of a Queer History within Roller Derby book, or a short video showcase.

This project has shown a strong community appetite exists around this approach and there is scope to take a similar approach to explore other sports as well as a clear opportunity to explore some of the key LGBTIQ+ changemakers within the history of physical activity and sport. Collaboration on other existing strands of work such as the National Libraries of Scotland Europeana project may help us to do this.

UKRAINE SPECIFIC

Analysing the deliverables and outcomes of the project we would highlight that for the goal we put for this project we would probably need more time. This would allow us to mobilize more people and to collect more evidential material, as well as to present the project to a bigger number of people.

The recommendation that we've got from the audience, e.g. participants of the community meetings, was to make our Story visible. We would need to publish it and to distribute for the local and regional libraries, universities, other cultural institutions. It would be appreciated if we could make a film based on the Story and interview people who paved the way for the modern LGBT+ movement, keeping the cultural and emotional attitude and presenting the development of the community.

