



izzy's promise

1 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1EL. Tel 01382 206222
www.izzyspromise.org.uk. Charity No SC033706

A MELTDOWN OF AFRICAN TRADITIONS AND CULTURES IN SCOTLAND

DELIVERED BY:

IZZY'S PROMISE 2014



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MELTDOWN PROJECT

How we conducted the project and the result

- 24 people interviewed
- 7 different countries
- A Freedom of Information Act from the last census showed that less than 1% of the Scottish Population identified as African that would prove to be difficult to find and interview these people.
- Posters were made and placed around different shops and businesses in the local that are accessed by the African Community.
- Connections were also made by a volunteer who was a member of the African community and through word of mouth from other interviewees.
- All interview were edited with names and dates of birth removed. Any bad language was also removed.

RESULTS FROM THE RECORDINGS

Food

- Food is expensive but everyone still seems to cook traditional food from their country. Some even highlighted they cook traditional food here more than back home.
- Lots of male interviewees don't know how to cook traditional African food.
- Cooking traditional food is something that they want to continue for generations to come.
- Due to food laws only some nations have access to the traditional foods from back home. Yet the staple food made of maize meal seems to be easily accessible.

Music

- Afro beats (mixing traditional African music with more western style) is becoming a big trend. Yet most prefer more traditional African music or artists rather than Afro beats.

Fashion

- Most people like African fashion yet don't tend to wear traditional dress as whether doesn't really permit for this.
- Muslims Africans tend to wear more traditional dress than other members of the African communities.



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Culture Shocks

- Moved for a variety of different reasons. First Generation tends to have moved for educational reasons. Third Generation tend to have been born in England and moved north.
- A massive amount of culture shocks when people moved.
 1. Daylight saving
 2. Drinking culture
 3. Calling people by their first names
 4. Weather
 5. Accent and slang words
 6. Difference in public transport
 7. Way people interacted with each other
 8. Lack of respect for parents
- One interviewee was fluent in French when he moved at 3 years old and had to learn English when over here.
- Most first and second generational interviewees speak some of their traditional language.
- Emphasis in African communities and families on education and most interviewed stated that University was a must and not really an option.
- When people have moved over from Africa and gone into the Scottish school system they have found it an easier learning environment. Both the way things are taught and the types of things that were taught both contributed to this difference.
- More freedom over here than back in Africa. Can do more things by yourself or with your friends. Can stay out later.

Ceremonies

- Naming ceremonies only occur in Nigeria. It is done with religion rather than the culture. Northern Nigeria is Muslim and has naming ceremonies 7 days after the baby is born. Southern Nigeria is Christian and has naming ceremonies 8 days after the baby is born.
- Names tend to be either family names or religious names.
- Ceremonies of any sort are a big affair in African cultures. Weddings or Christenings tend to be fairly large here but larger back home as there is no formal invite. It is also seen as an insult if not everyone is welcome. Tend not to know all the guests.
- The only Rites of Passage that were mentioned were from Botswana and happen in the tribes Bakgatla. Boy's rites of passage are called Bogwera; they are taken away during the summer and circumcised. Girls go through



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Bojale where they spend the summer with their mother learning about how to cook and clean.

- Weddings are a big affair in African Culture with some lasting up to a week.
- Weddings have a religious ceremony with a reception afterwards. African weddings in Scotland tend to be smaller due to restrictions in the cost and venue space. Some people will have both a traditional and western wedding on two different weekends.

Dowry

- Dowry still occurs in Scotland between the African communities. Yet, it has changed from giving cows and lands to more a monetary value. It has become more expensive in Scotland to give dowry.
- Some third generational had not heard of dowry due to not having family back in their native country.
- Dowry is still an important symbol in African Culture. It is seen as a sign of respect and not as the value of someone's worth.
- Dowry is something that people want for their daughters.
- One interviewee didn't know that Scottish culture doesn't have dowry and was happy to pay dowry for a Scottish Girl. Joking that marrying a Scottish girl is cheaper.

Interracial Relationships

- Interracial relationships tend to be becoming more accepted within the African community as traditionally you would marry with your tribe.
- Unsure whether the attitudes and opinions of the parent's generation have changed or that there is limited option to marry within your tribe in Scotland.
- It was highlighted that people have not heard of interracial relationships leading to interracial marriages.

Greetings

- Traditional greetings are something that seems to only still be used with elder members of the community in Scotland. Some people are dissolving the actions of the greetings as they do not work in Scottish culture.
- Greetings are still used back in their home nations when they go and visit.
- Most people do not use the first names of any relatives or friends in the community but rather call them Auntie or Uncle or the more formal Sir or Madam.
- Greetings vary depending on the countries or tribe the interviewees are from but they do tend to have a difference in the greeting if you are male or female.



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Extended Families

- Family is extremely important in the African communities and so regular contact with back home is essential. This has been made easier due to Skype and whatsapp.
- It was highlighted that if you don't speak the traditional native or tribal language it is difficult to converse with people back home without your parents; therefore contact loss may be common once they have grown up.
- Some people whose parents come from polygamist families can't keep in touch with all the family members as they themselves tend to have too many immediate family members.

Property Inheritance

- Property Inheritance tends to follow very similar rules as Scotland that most people get what is left to them.
- Nigeria with polygamous families uses property inheritance to help decide what each family member gets. Everyone gets something. The wives get an equal divide of assets and the sons get more than the daughters.

Gender Equality

- Gender equality attitudes have not change with the younger generations especially if they were born in Scotland or the UK.
- It was suggested that traditionally in Africa the son would go onto get a job and further education while the daughters learn more about being a housewife; therefore some of the attitudes of the older first generations have changed a little.

Nursing Homes

- The issue of Nursing Homes was something which isn't an option back in Africa therefore people are unwilling to put their parents in a nursing home.
- It was suggested that the parents would move in with one of their children to take care of them or move back home to Africa where extended family and members of the community would help.
- Most don't want their parents in nursing homes as they have worked in nursing homes.
- One interviewee said that if they were to stay in Scotland it may not be possible to leave their job to look after their parents therefore a nursing home may be the final solution.



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Racism

- Most people said that they have not experience racism with others stating that they have experienced some. Although most people said that when they initially moved people use to look at them on the streets that they weren't use to.
- Racism has been mainly in the form of not being able to find jobs. Most feel they are at a disadvantage due to not being Scottish and having a different accent.
- Throughout the interviews people have mentioned that they have lost a little bit of their African culture living in Scotland as many things cannot be done in the same way therefore they have changed their behaviour slightly.
- Although it was mentioned that they have also gained a little of the Scottish culture as well but do not identify as Scottish and feel integrated and accepted.
- Most people would like to visit their native countries again at some point. Yet some said they would have to learn their traditional language to converse back home.

Africa

- Africa is a very rich and beautiful continent.
- Africa sustains the main ideas from where you come from.
- What you see in the media is not the true picture of Africa.
- Africa is unique.
- Africa is united but integrity in leaders would lead to a trickledown effect.
- Africa is one of the best places in the world.



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