The Culture Houses and the Community Integration of Kópavogur

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Our project assessed the Culture Houses’ events to enhance the organization’s vision of being a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for the community.

Kyle Harding, Kevin Mercier, Benjamin Steeves, and Jordyn Van Minos

08 October 2019

Report Submitted to:
Ms. Hrafnhildur Gissurardóttir
The Culture Houses of Kópavogur

Professor Fred Looft
Professor Ingrid Shockey
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
The Cultural Houses and the Community Integration of Kópavogur

An Interactive Qualifying Project submitted to the Faculty of WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Abstract

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur are an association focused on community building through weekly cultural events, including Culture Wednesdays and Family Saturdays. Our project involved surveying event attendees to understand demographics and guests’ experiences. We also interviewed community leaders to assess external perceptions of the Culture Houses. Our data led to recommendations that include enhancing the current events with new topics for underrepresented groups with a deeper consideration of language barriers. Other ideas involve improving promotional strategies and collaborating with community organizations. Our recommendations should help the Culture Houses enhance their vision of being a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for the community.
Executive Summary

Introduction

Starting in the 1990s, Iceland has witnessed a large increase in immigration, fueled by job opportunities and asylum circumstances. Immigrants in Iceland, recently called New Icelanders, have had a unique role in the building of Icelandic culture. The cultural diversity immigrants have brought to Iceland has both positively and negatively impacted the lives of all community members. As Iceland becomes more open to tourists and New Icelanders, the country is compelled to acknowledge different cultural backgrounds.

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur serve as a collaborative community resource that host and exemplify history, music, visual arts, performing arts, and sciences. This organization is comprised of five individual buildings including the Gerðarsafn Art Museum, the Kópavogur Public Library, the Natural History Museum of Kópavogur, the Salurinn Concert Hall, and the Kópavogur Archives. The Culture Houses look to unify the Kópavogur community by providing weekly events for the public that engage participants in diverse cultural activities. These activities develop a mutual understanding of different cultures and help the Culture Houses enhance their image as a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource. Our project focuses on the analysis of these weekly events and an assessment of the Culture Houses’ relationship with local organizations and the residents of Kópavogur.

Approach

We developed four objectives to understand the role of Culture Houses in the community. We designed a flowchart to represent our goals and objectives.

Results

Event Demographics

The age of the attendees varied at both Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events. Culture Wednesdays generally attracted older individuals, with 79% of survey participants between the ages of 50 and 80 years old. Family Saturdays more frequently saw 30 to 50-year-old adults/parents (63%), and grandparents/elderly participants (31%). The attendance for Culture Wednesdays varied each event, where events at Gerðarsafn Art Museum had 15 to 20 attendees and events at Salurinn Concert Hall had 40-50
attendees. At Family Saturday events the attendance on average was 30-50 attendees, including parents and their children. Four Saturday events and three Wednesday events that we attended were held in the Icelandic language.

When measuring past attendance at Family Saturdays, around 67%, or two thirds of the survey participants, had been to an event in the past three months. This also implies that one third of the current attendees at events are either new or attend events only once every year (Family Saturday Past Attendance).

Our research on the nationalities of the 53 attending the Family Saturday and Culture Wednesday events revealed that 49 of the guests were Icelandic. When looking at the participants who were of Icelandic nationality, about 84% percent of them spoke English as a second language. In addition to basic demographics, we researched the use of different social media networks. From surveys on Family Saturdays, 73% of the participants reported they used Facebook every day making it the most commonly used social media platform. Instagram was the second most commonly used platform at 58%. Our surveys also showed that a majority of participants (16) at Culture House events lived in the town of Kópavogur but there were 9 participants from outside the town.

Our surveys also showed that a majority of participants (16) at Culture House events lived in the town of Kópavogur but there were 9 participants from outside the town.

Attendees’ Experiences
Attendees learned about weekly events primarily through Facebook and brochures and attended Family Saturdays for the family-oriented and child friendly atmosphere. Meanwhile, guests attended Culture Wednesdays to learn about and appreciate different cultures. The specific motives for attending events are based on our interview and survey data (Guests’ Motives). Attendees were pleased with the mix of activities and themes at the events and found them interesting, enjoyable, and educational. One guest referred to the Family Saturday events as “family fun, something for the whole family” (interview response, August 31, 2019). However, we often observed that families did not interact with other families. To this point, one guest described being “more focused on [their] family than meeting new people” (interview response, August 31, 2019). All participants who were asked about the atmosphere found it to be open-minded and many enjoyed how the events were not too busy. Guests suggested that events should offer more active participation, language help sessions, interpreters, and more book readings. Some respondents also stated that childcare would increase their interest in attending events.
External Perceptions

To understand how the community felt about the Culture Houses, we interviewed local organization leaders about their thoughts on the Culture Houses. A visual art gallery, Midpunkt, felt that individuals tend to associate themselves with those who have similar cultural backgrounds. We then visited Pastor Sigurður Arnarson of Kópavogskirkja, a church near the Culture Houses, who stated that the church served the whole community; he realized that Iceland was opening up to different cultures and expressed a need for a communal mutual understanding. Later on, we met with teachers of a local Kindergarten school, Marbakki, to discuss cultural diversity in the classroom. The teachers described how they have held multicultural weeks where they spent their class time learning about cultural diversity through art projects. We then spoke with choir directors from another local school, Kársnesskóli, who noted how local Icelandic residents are embracing the New Icelanders and believe that singing songs can help teach these groups new languages. The choir directors also explained that some families do not try to integrate into Icelandic communities if their family is only staying for a few years. Similarly, at a local music school, Skólahljómsveit Kópavogs, a band director noted that many New Icelandic students were applying, and that the school prides themselves on their no bullying policy.

Discussion

One of the major trends involving the Culture House events is the noticeable absence of individuals from two age groups, young adults 18-30 years old and middle-aged 50-60 year-olds. The absence of these individuals could be attributed to the events not being tailored towards their schedules and interests. While the events are well designed to accommodate for a culturally rich learning environment, hosting a majority of the events in the Icelandic language is not welcoming to all of the diverse groups in Kópavogur. Family Saturdays and Culture Wednesdays are less accessible to New Icelandic and other non-Icelandic speaking residents when they are promoted and held strictly in the Icelandic language. At both Wednesday and Saturday events, guests often only interacted with those they attended and had minimal interactions with other guests. Due to this limited interaction, the attendees are less likely to meet new people, which lessens community involvement. On Family Saturdays, if children were to participate with other children in cultural activities, they could build relationships and consequently promote interactions between their parents. This would potentially lead to those families attending future events together.

A different trend, developed from our observations of the Culture Houses and interactions with community leaders, exposed the under-utilization of the Salurinn Concert Hall as a public space. We understand that Salurinn needs to maintain its professional atmosphere, however there are still many hours where it appears to not be in use. By offering the space to the community groups, Salurinn would be better able to reach out to the local citizens. These groups have the potential of drawing in more diverse crowds from their own organizations which would enhance the demographics of the Culture Houses’ events.

Recommendations

We have identified five areas of improvement for the Culture Houses to maintain their image as a ‘second home’ for the community of Kópavogur.
**Enhance the Culture Houses’ Social Media Presence**

The data collected from surveys and interviews showed how Facebook and Instagram were the most popular social media platforms among the attendees. Therefore, the Culture Houses should advertise their Facebook and Instagram pages on posters in the buildings’ foyers so people can use these pages to learn about events. Additionally, these pages should include event specific Facebook groups to provide room for discussion and promote future events.

**Collect Additional Participant and Community Data**

Based on similar information regarding the social media usage of the attendees in the previous recommendations, the Culture Houses should create Facebook polls for attendees to vote on possible cultural topics for upcoming events. The Culture Houses should also post a permanent survey on their website to provide general feedback from attendees regarding the current events.

**Collaborate with Organizations in the Community**

By building more relationships with local organizations, such as Midpunkt and Kópavogskirkja, the Culture Houses would diversify their attendance and help integrate the community. To help promote the Culture Houses’ weekly events to the students’ families, the Culture Houses should provide informational cards to Marbakkí Kindergarten to be sent home with the students. Furthermore, a partnership with local music groups and Salurinn Concert Hall would enhance the image of the Culture Houses as a community space. Additionally, the Culture Houses should sponsor a future project group, or work with an outside organization to set up a virtual reality exhibit. These exhibits would allow the archived artwork to be permanently displayed and help create interest among different groups.

**Improve Community Relations**

The Culture Houses should develop events that promote interactions between different participants because attendees admitted to only associating with the friends or family they attended with. Providing paired family events could help encourage new interactions between different families and increase community relationships. Also, establishing more events in the English language would help accommodate for all community members, foreign and native, because our research showed a majority of residents speak English as a first or second language. New and native Icelanders could share more interactions at these events without a language barrier.

**Attract Underrepresented Attendees**

Events should be created for both 18-30 year-olds and 50-60 year-olds, which are two underrepresented groups at the Culture Houses. In order to attract these groups, events should be held at different times for with new alternative topics. Additionally, events such as language learning classes should be created for New Icelanders, to help them become more involved at the Culture Houses. By learning the Icelandic language, New Icelanders could experience new opportunities that were previously hindered by language barriers. During more mature events, the Culture Houses should implement a childcare service so parents can be completely engaged in activities they are interested in.

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur are in the process of analyzing their role in the community. The organization currently provides weekly cultural events that often do not reach key groups in the community. Based on our research, we formulated recommendations to help enhance the Culture Houses’ image as a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for all residents of Kópavogur.
Acknowledgements

We would like to recognize the individuals and organizations that have supported us throughout our research. First and foremost, we would like to thank Ms. Hrafnhildur Gissurardóttir for her continuous aid and direction during our project. We would like to give a special thanks to the other project managers, Helga Einarstdóttir, Rikey Hlín Sævarsdóttir, Ólöf Breidjörd and the rest of the Culture House staff for welcoming and supporting our team during our project.

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This project was a collaborative effort among all team members where each section was continuously reviewed and edited by the entire team. The table shows the main contributor(s) to each section.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Iceland is an island nation with a unique demographic evolution. In recent decades, the country has experienced significant growth in both tourism and immigration, resulting in a more culturally diverse society. As new immigrants, locally known as ‘New Icelanders’, are integrating into the local communities, they expand the breadth of Iceland’s culture. Consequently, it is important for diverse communities to build relationships and an atmosphere of mutual understanding to establish a welcoming home.

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur is a collection of public buildings that include two museums, a library, an archive building, and a concert hall neighboring each other around the ‘Culture Hill’ of Kópavogur (Figure 1). Their mission, among other values, is to unify community members through weekly events focused on creative cultural expression. Part of the vision for the Culture Houses of Kópavogur is to create a ‘second home’ for the surrounding neighborhoods. The individual Culture Houses’ project managers are trying to enhance relationships between people of different backgrounds and create learning opportunities by holding events at their five locations. These events are designed to give an appreciation for the arts and culture of all individuals to understand the importance of acceptance in a community. The project managers hope that by hosting events, the Culture Houses will be viewed as a place of gathering, in addition to the different amenities offered at the individual buildings.

The project managers of each building want to expand their collaborative efforts to showcase how culture can be expressed in different forms. However, it is not clear how well these efforts are resonating in the community. To that end, they are in need of an assessment of their cultural events to learn key demographic trends and to better understand attendees’ perceptions of the activities. In particular, the project managers would like to learn more about the perspectives of the ‘New Icelanders’, who are thought to be underrepresented at the events. Therefore, our goal was to assess the Culture Houses’ events to enhance the organization’s vision of being a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for the community. To accomplish this goal, we completed the following four objectives:

• Establish the demographics of the attendees at the cultural events
• Investigate the experiences of attendees during the cultural events
• Assess external perceptions of the Culture Houses in the community
• Develop recommendations to improve the logistics and content of the Culture Houses’ events
Chapter 2 Literature Review

The following literature review provides details on the background of immigration to Iceland, the dynamics of forming culturally diverse communities, the Culture Houses and their events, and how the arts can help unify diverse communities.

The New Icelanders

Iceland was home to a largely homogenous population until the 1990s (Durrenberger, 2015). Before that time, there was a small wave of German immigrants who came to Iceland looking for work. This was the first significant immigration to the country, but the population of Iceland was still largely homogenous until the 1990s and 2000s (Ísberg, 2010). Around this time, job opportunities started to draw in a steady stream of immigrants until the economic crash of 2008. This financial crisis halted the flow of immigration to Iceland until around three years later, when the economy rebounded and immigration rates began to rise again (Statistics, 2019). The new residents, locally known as ‘New Icelanders’, consists largely of Polish immigrants who have found work in the fishing, construction, and housekeeping industries. Other new arrivals include war refugees and asylum seekers, which further diversify the Icelandic population. As an effect of this immigration, Iceland—and the greater Reykjavik area in particular—has merged different nationalities into the identity of Iceland (Heleniak & Sigurjonsdottir, 2018).

While there are many New Icelandic families from different backgrounds, the majority of the immigrant population is from Eastern Europe. The arrival of these New Icelanders is partly due to the Schengen Agreement, which Iceland joined in 2001. This agreement, put into place by the European Union in 1985, abolished internal borders and border checks, which has made intra-European movement easier (Schengen: Controversial EU, 2016). According to immigration data, Eastern Europeans tend to migrate west; the two largest and most recent migrant groups in Europe being Lithuanian and Polish (Migration and migrant, 2019). There are several factors that contribute to this movement; however, economic opportunity is the primary motivation. In many cases, entire families relocate within Europe when one family member secures employment in a foreign country (White, 2010).

Other reasons for intra-European movement include educational opportunities. For example, students are encouraged to take advantage of the Erasmus Program, which allows them to attend school in other EU countries. Depending on the school, students take part in this program because it is a degree requirement or because they want to experience a new country (Erasmus Programme, 2019). Studying abroad can also naturally lead to more work opportunities for these students (Castro-Martín & Cortina, 2015).
Relocation to Iceland

As noted earlier, immigration to Iceland has significantly increased again in the past decade after the dip in 2008. Figure 3 indicates that the yearly net foreign immigration to Iceland did not exceed 2,500 until about 2003. This means there was a positive net immigration of 2,500 foreign individuals relocating to Iceland. It then declined but rebounded significantly to just under 8,000 in 2016. The policies regarding the immigration of these individuals are less strict for those immigrating from countries included in the Schengen Agreement, compared to the policies for countries who are not. Individuals from countries not included in the Schengen Agreement have limited options, which include “marry[ing] an Icelander, attend[ing] a university in Iceland; or secur[ing] a work permit for a job in Iceland” (Seidel, 2018).

Figure 3: Net foreign immigration to Iceland in the past twenty-two years (Statistics, 2019, adapted).
The origin countries vary widely for New Icelanders, however, of the total number of immigrants in 2016, Polish citizens made up 36% of that population. The Polish population was and still is the single largest New Icelandic group in the country, as indicated in Figure 4 (Fontaine, 2018; Heleniak & Sigurjons-dottir, 2018).

Furthermore, the number of immigrants from Poland has greatly increased over an eleven-year period. Other Eastern and Southern European immigrants have also continued to immigrate to Iceland during this time. Residents from these regions, especially those living in rural areas, find there are little to no means to have a successful future. The condition of their community, the number of suitable jobs in the area, and the ability to support a family are all limited in their home country. Some younger individuals of these regions feel as though their families are holding them back, so they pursue opportunities abroad. Because of these reasons, this kind of migration is viewed as “forced” because of limited options and the perceived need to leave and look for opportunities elsewhere (White, 2010).

A portion of Iceland’s immigrants can also be attributed to asylum seekers from war-torn countries, who represented 185 of Iceland’s new immigrants in 2019, increasing from years past (Asylum, 2019). In these cases, the applicants were generally fleeing from war, and the extreme violence that war has brought on them. A tragic interview with a Syrian family illustrates the trauma of why they fled their home country. One of the family members, Mr. Al Mohammad, said “I saw the Syrian Army dragging a man from a car through the streets” and “three of my friends were killed” (Rowley, 2016). In this case, new residents are here due to ‘forced’ migration, and while the underlying factors for their relocation are significantly different, most resettlement experiences of Polish immigrants and war refugees are similar. The refugees that relocate to Iceland can be found in towns like Kópavogur and have seen a mix of hospitality and hostility, but, reportedly, the former is more prevalent (ibid., 2016).

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Figure 4: Top ten origin countries of immigrants in Iceland (Heleniak & Sigurjons-dottir, 2018).
Forming Community Relations from Diversity

Immigrants in Iceland have had a unique role in the building of Icelandic culture over the last 70 years. The cultural diversity they bring to Icelandic societies has both positively and negatively impacted the lives of all community members. Looking at the past few decades, the relationship between native Icelanders and New Icelanders was positive until the economic crash of 2008 (Edyal & Ottósdóttir 2009). At that time, major Icelandic banks collapsed causing unemployment to skyrocket, leaving many people vulnerable (Durrenberger, 2015). Before the crash, immigrant labor had been welcomed as it contributed to the booming economy, but afterwards, many Icelanders formed negative social perceptions around these immigrant workers. As housing prices skyrocketed, strain increased between New Icelanders and some local families competing for low income housing.

Employers started preferring native Icelandic residents for work because they were friends and family—people who they wanted to help during these difficult times. Some Icelandic companies would rather hire native Icelanders than foreigners because they preferred workers who spoke Icelandic, instead of other languages, to prevent miscommunication in the workplace (Domurath, 2011). Although some foreign workers could communicate using English or Icelandic, the people of Iceland wanted to return to their roots, focused on improving the lives of the native Icelanders. Immigrant language education was also cut during this time making it harder for immigrants to learn the Icelandic language. The economic crash and the years that followed were a difficult time for New Icelanders and their relations with the country (Edyal & Ottósdóttir, 2009).

Studies of the social perception of newcomers in Iceland reveal that there are certain misunderstandings between these different social subgroups, new and old Icelanders. A Facebook study investigated these views to determine how immigration has impacted the different social and financial classes of Iceland. The study concluded that respondents in Iceland with lower forms of education had a stronger negative bias towards immigrants when compared to respondents with higher forms of education. This negative bias appeared to stem from perceived threats that immigrants take a majority of low paying jobs in Iceland, creating more competition for work. On the other hand, respondents with a higher level of education had a more positive attitude towards the reformed labor workforce of immigrants in Iceland. Highly educated citizens assumed their own careers are safe as it is difficult for immigrants to compete for jobs that require higher qualification due to language barriers and other experience. There is also the notion that highly educated professionals have less social bias and are more open minded due to schooling and knowledge of social concepts (Eyjólfsdóttir, 2017). This data

Figure 5: Informational panel in Reykjavík on the history of German immigrants in Icelandic communities in 1949.
gives a general snapshot and some insight into the possible strains which could exacerbate the distance between new Icelanders and the established communities in towns like Kópavogur.

The Icelandic government wants to help integrate immigrants by providing support in learning about the Icelandic language and traditions, while still encouraging them to retain their own customs (Heleniak & Sigurjonsdottir, 2018). However, there is evidence of Icelandic skepticism regarding immigrants from Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries. The assumption is that New Icelanders from Non-Western countries may have a more difficult time integrating into Icelandic societies due to perceived differences of Iceland’s culture (Eyjólfsdóttir, 2017). Some of these misconceptions stem from the differing expectations of the new residents. New Icelandic parents may have conflicting views when it pertains to which educational topics should be focused on. Students in Iceland are encouraged to take up classes involving art and culture which reside outside of the usual math and science requirements (Gunnþórsdóttir, Barillé, & Meckl, 2018). Some New Icelandic parents may not approve of this focus on the arts, but they are compelled to accept this shift in educational learning. One study on Polish adolescents and their attitudes toward languages and cultures in Iceland revealed that young New Icelanders may sense the difference between Icelandic societies and their original homes. A participant in an interview stated “Poland is ‘another climate. I feel different there.’ But in Iceland, ‘it’s not the same, it’s another world,’ with different customs, ‘different culture, different food. Completely different, new.’” (Berman, Lefever, & Wozniczka, 2011). A similar article also analyzed the social and political integration of immigrants in Iceland and found “participants with a foreign background felt less connected and less cared for by the Icelandic government, and they sensed that they were less knowledgeable and less informed than participants with an Icelandic background” (Einarsdóttir, Heijstra, & Rafnsdóttir, 2018). New Icelanders are overall disconnected from their communities due to their social perceptions of the government and the Icelandic culture.

Figure 6: A Filipino immigrant working in an Icelandic fish factory (Heleniak, Ministerrádet, & Nordregio 2018).

Even though New Icelanders may not fully understand the ways of Icelandic societies, they are willing to somewhat adapt and compromise with their new environment. While New Icelandic parents understand the significance of freedom and creativity within Icelandic schools, they also count on teachers to require effort from their children as part of their learning experience (Gunnþórsdóttir, Barillé, & Meckl, 2018). Although they feel like they are in different worlds, Polish adolescents seem to be accepted in Icelandic schools, finding themselves among multiple friends from Iceland and various other countries (Berman, Lefever, & Wozniczka, 2011). Some Icelandic immigrants are trying to integrate their culture and lives into their new communities, but this has proven to be an uncomfortable and ambiguous matter for both new and old Icelanders.

However, in the more recent years, the complex perceptions of New Icelanders have become less evident in communities. Iceland’s economy has rebounded and now many immigrants find themselves overcoming
their disadvantages in the job and housing markets. Hjördís Rut Sigurjónsdóttir, a social researcher quoted by Lindsay, explained the current situation of immigrants in Iceland, stating:

“many people realize that some companies, and some sectors even, wouldn't be able to operate without immigrants. They have come and filled the jobs that are not seen as attractive (to Icelanders). So, I think many people realize that we need immigrants because we are not nearly enough to fill those jobs” (2019).

Furthermore, as younger generations become more aware of cultural differences, immigrants in Iceland have hope for better community relations. As Iceland becomes more open to tourists and New Icelanders, the country is compelled to acknowledge different cultural backgrounds.
The Culture Houses of Kópavogur

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur strive to be a welcoming space to all Icelanders. The Culture Houses support the community in building supportive relationships and overcoming cultural differences. The Culture Houses include the Gerðarsafn Art Museum, the Salurinn Concert Hall, the Natural History Museum of Kópavogur, the Kópavogur Public Library, and the Kópavogur Archives. A map of the building locations is provided below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Schematic map of Culture Houses (adapted from Culture House poster).

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur host events to educate visitors on topics including history, music, visual arts, performing arts, and sciences. This cultural hub is a community resource where the residents of Kópavogur are able to build supportive relationships. The Culture Houses are a welcoming public space and make strong efforts to help integrate the diverse social groups that exist in the neighborhoods of Kópavogur. The organization strives to enhance the fact that the Culture Houses are a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for the community.
Mission of the Culture Houses

To encourage a fair and equitable foundation, the Culture Houses of Kópavogur have adopted fourteen of the United Nations sustainable development goals as a part of their organization model. The following goals are shown in Figure 8 and additional information on each goal is located in Appendix A.

The sustainability goals “provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future” and have been used as a benchmark for positive growth (United Nations, 2019). These goals set standards for organizations to guide their development in a manner that is most beneficial for humanity and the environment. By structuring their organization around the achievement of these specific goals, the Culture Houses help to improve the social and environmental well-being of the community.

Doing their part in reducing poverty (#1), for example, entrance to the Kópavogur Public Library and the Natural History Museum are free of charge and all the weekly events held at the Culture Houses are free for everyone. As there are many different socio-economic groups in the Kópavogur region, the Culture Houses help citizens of all economic statuses be exposed to culture and the arts. The experienced staff at the Culture Houses also provide valuable education on many unique cultures. These programs welcome people of all types and backgrounds—Figure 9, for example, shows a brochure for a cultural hunt provided in Icelandic, Polish, and English.
English—which aligns with the goals of gender equality (#5) and reduced inequalities (#10). Creating events with these goals as a baseline helps to ensure positive experiences and uphold the Culture Houses’ vision of being a safe and diverse place.

Cultural Events

The Culture Houses of Kópavogur differ from the typical museum because among the main attractions, there are community oriented and culturally diverse weekly events. The Culture Houses provide these events in efforts to create more social engagement to help integrate the community. Specifically, the Culture Houses provide two weekly events, Culture Wednesdays and Family Saturdays, with both events being completely free of charge.

The Culture Wednesday events rotate between the Gerðarsafn Art Museum, the Salurinn Concert Hall, the Natural History Museum, and the Kópavogur Public Library. The events take place during lunchtime from 12:15 - 12:45. These events are for everyone and are focused around the arts and learning about culture. Figure 10 shows an opera-style concert at the Salurinn Concert Hall during a Culture Wednesday event. Other events include readings, book reviews, short guided tours, and other presentations (The Culture Houses, 2019).

Family Saturday events, on the other hand, are directed towards children and their parents. These events also rotate between the buildings and are hosted every Saturday from 13:00 - 15:00. The programs are comprised of art workshops, concerts, and book readings (The Culture Houses, 2019). Figure 11 shows children and parents participating in a paper dragon Family Saturday workshop where families used different colored paper strips to create dragons.

In addition to their events, the Culture Houses also provide festivals for the community. The organization often works with local businesses within Kópavogur to put on weekend festivals that take advantage of different spaces around the community. The Culture Houses hosted a Multicultural Family Festival (Autumn festival) which includes events held at all the individual buildings. Figures 12 and 13, respectively, show families learning Moroccan dance and listening to Moroccan music, and families working together building structures with foam.
blocks. This year the Culture Houses also co-hosted the first Polish-Icelandic festival in Kópavogur, which included local events at an art gallery, restaurant, and supermarket.

Providing these events allows the Culture Houses to move beyond serving frequent museum visitors, and instead develop relations with community members who might rarely attend a museum. Involving all members of the community will help the Culture Houses integrate the distinct social groups that exist in the town of Kópavogur, including teenagers, the elderly, and New Icelanders.

How Museums Stay Relevant

Understanding factors that create interest for participants at museums and exhibitions is important when museums attempt to increase their attendance numbers. A study conducted by two researchers, Roberto Cellini and Tiziana Cuccia, examined Italian State museums and studied national attendance data from 1996 to 2015 (2018). The study found that offering free admission days at a museum can benefit attendance at the museum as a whole. Having certain days with free admission can often help museums because as the attendance on free admission days increases, the attendance on charged admission days increases as well. By offering free admission days, populations with lower incomes have the opportunity to be more involved with museums, increasing the public’s overall interest in museums (Gofman, Mets, & Moskowitz, 2011).

A second study conducted in the United States surveyed museum attendees comparing the impacts of features, services, topics, and visiting hours which influence people attending an exhibition. The study confirmed the assumption that age can be an influential factor when it comes to interests in museums’ exhibits. Age can also affect the time of day and specific days in which attendees are available (Gofman, Mets, & Moskowitz, 2011).

Furthermore, Gofman et. al. found that more informal amenities like in-house restaurants have the ability to increase interest in museums because of the social aspects (2011). When museums are looking to attract people of different ages and backgrounds, creating a social environment is important to generate guest interactions and increase museum interest.
The Arts as a Common Language

The arts allow us to express ourselves freely to others. In a community, this creative expression can be used as an outlet for cultural appreciation. According to multiple studies on the impact of art on communities, projects concerning the arts, “create a greater understanding of different cultures [and elicit] a greater sense of community identity” (Kay, 2000, p. 415). This understanding gives community members an appreciation for their differences and mitigates negative social perceptions. Seana Lowe, a doctoral candidate at the University of Colorado, published her research on cultural associations in low-income neighborhoods concluding that, “having individuals come together to reflect and create based on a shared experience also fostered the emergence of collective identity” (2000, p. 374). Through this identity, art becomes a common ground for citizens to become more involved in their community. In turn, this communal identity creates a ‘common culture’ giving a sense of unity to its members. This inclusion into society brings different groups together by “addressing contemporary social challenges” through the arts and increasing the promotion of these events to “the most excluded groups” (Kay, 2000, p. 417-419). This sense of belonging helps to strengthen a community by providing a type of support system for the citizens. The arts are able to “transcend structural [culture] differences to define [the disparate community participants] as a cohesive group” (Lowe, 2000, p. 379).

Several of the researchers referenced by Lowe agreed that art is an “inherent quality of cultural symbolism”; in other words, people use art to express their cultural identities (2000, p. 360). Art is an important factor in a community’s cultural identity because it engages residents to interact with each other. Increased involvement in art projects are used to develop more active communities that build stronger relationships between the locals (Kay, 2000, p. 422). Anne Bamford states in her research that in Iceland, “amateur arts are a strong force” that helps unite the community in this way (2009, p. 36). These amateur arts, including local bands and theatre groups, help to relate community members of different backgrounds. This involvement and relationship building help to “improve the local image with people feeling more positive about where they live” (Kay, 2000, p. 422).

The Culture Houses bring the community together by providing weekly events for the public that engage participants in diverse cultural activities. Figure 14 illustrates a family cultural event at the Culture Houses where parents and children designed parts of a ‘mosaic carpet.’ This is an example of an activity where individuals are able to connect by creating a single artwork from their unique pieces. These connections give a sense of belonging to the community members “by learning methods of creative expression and getting [a] community response to [the participant’s] creative efforts” (Lowe, 2000, p. 374). These arts are not only limited to visual arts, music, dance, and performing arts; art in this case is an inclusive term to cover all forms of creative expression such as cooking, quilting, writing, and so forth.
The Arts as an Expression of Identity

Another aspect of Icelandic society is the emphasis of art in the education system. Icelandic people have a steadfast belief that the arts are integral to the learning process of a child (Bamford, 2009). This belief is based on the idea that creativity in schools is meant to “build the character of the child, encouraging moral behavior, greater intelligence, and industriousness”, which develops a child’s sense of belonging in society early on (Olafsson & Thorsteinsson, 2009, p. 10).

Lowe further discusses a report concluding how the arts are able to, “offer opportunities for children and youth to learn new skills, expand their horizons and develop a sense of self, well-being and belonging” (2000, p. 359). These opportunities in the arts provide children with a moral sense of tolerance for people with different beliefs and cultures (Kay, 2000). Multiple researchers have found that the arts link to the acceptance of promoting, “a view of community development based on… creative inter-dependence rather than destructive competition” (ibid., p. 423). By teaching this behavior in schools, children gain an early-on sense of open-mindedness and teamwork. The arts, therefore, allow students to express themselves while also accepting the ways other children may express themselves. Icelandic educators support the inclusion of arts into their curriculum, “to enable individuals to identify and to understand what life” holds for them (Olafsson & Thorsteinsson, 2009, p. 11).

Social perceptions of others are alleviated because of this sense of purpose taught in schools helping to integrate children of different backgrounds into the community. In Figure 15, a child was brought on stage during a cultural play at a festival event for the Culture Houses. Giving children an outlet to express themselves and making them feel a part of a diverse group through the ideas of cultural acceptance promotes a unified community for future generations (Kay, 2000, p. 415). These generations, in turn, are able to pass down these methods of cultural expression and begin a cycle of acceptance throughout all age groups.

Children are able to show a sense of self and belonging to their parents after learning about expression through art projects in school. This is especially evident in immigrant families, where the children may act as “language brokers” for their parents (Weisskirch, 2010). Culture Houses link the experience that the children have in their schools with their home life by providing family events. At these events, the parents can see how the arts have helped their child’s development. Despite cultural differences, these programs allow New Icelandic parents to demonstrate the importance in teaching children “the needs required of the current generation without abandoning or forgetting cultural heritage” (Lowe, 2000, p. 372). The Family Saturdays promote this cultural integration by allowing families to come and learn about new cultures together.

Figure 15: Child brought on stage to play a part during cultural festival.
Arts projects have the ability to express differences in culture and bring together a community. Having a space for a community to take part in art projects enables this expression (Kay, 2000). The Culture Houses collaborate to display how the arts are interconnected through different media and become tools for community building.

**Summary**

A review of the literature confirmed that immigration has contributed to more cultural diversity in the greater Reykjavik area. The Culture Houses strive to strengthen the Kópavogur community with weekly cultural events that embrace this diversity through different forms of art. In order to maintain their image as a community resource, the Culture Houses want to investigate their current attendance and the surrounding community to understand how well the organization is reaching the public. This literature review has helped our team devise a set of methodologies to research this topic.
Chapter 3 Methodology

The goal of our project was to assess the Culture Houses’ events to enhance the organization’s vision of being a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for the community. To achieve this goal, we identified four objectives below.

1. Establish the demographics of the attendees at the cultural events
2. Investigate the experiences of attendees during the cultural events
3. Assess external perceptions of the Culture Houses in the community
4. Develop recommendations to improve the logistics and content of the Culture Houses’ events

The methods used to address each goal are illustrated in Figure 16 and described below.

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**Figure 16: Chart of our goal, objectives, and methods.**
Objective 1: Establish the demographics of the attendees at the cultural events

To achieve this objective, we observed and recorded the demographic information of individuals attending Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events. Through observation, we collected information pertaining to approximate age, gender, and language of the presenters for each event. Our team also recorded the number of people that attended the events and if participants came with others or by themselves.

We collected qualitative attendee data through structured surveys at the end of the Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events. The information included:

- How attendees heard about the events
- How often they attended events
- How far the attendees traveled to the event
- Who they would recommend these events to
- The likelihood of participating in future events

These surveys also collected quantitative data such as gender, age, nationality, social media usage, spoken languages, and number of children. Electronic and paper surveys were both provided during the events. Surveys were also posted on the Culture House’s Facebook page and distributed using the Culture Houses’ mailing list. The complete surveys can be found in Appendix B, C, D, and E.

Objective 2: Investigate the experiences of attendees during the cultural events

In objective two, we wanted to understand the experiences, interests, and opinions of the attendees at cultural events. We began with participatory observations of the events to determine if they were easy to understand, instructional, and engaging. We also collected data on the attendees’ experiences by observing engagement and interactions with the event material and other guests.

We furthered our investigation through informal open-ended interviews with the attendees. These interviews acted as a “conversation with a purpose” that provided an understanding of the perspectives of the attendees and an insight on the guests’ experience (Beebe, 2014, p. 55). The interview guides, which can be found in Appendix F, were centered around:

- The guests’ motives for attending the event
- What aspects of the event attendees found interesting
- What topics of culture do attendees find interesting
- How guests experienced a sense of community at the event
- How the guests’ experience was with the staff
- How the event could be improved

Open ended survey questions were also included in our electronic surveys, paper surveys, and Facebook page survey that addressed the experiences, interests, and opinions of the attendees. These questions, included in Appendix D and E, were grouped with our interview responses.
Objective 3: Assess external perceptions of the Culture Houses in the community

For this objective, we investigated the community members’ thoughts on culture and their opinions of the Culture Houses. We started by conducting a geographic site assessment to evaluate the layout of Kópavogur. By observing local businesses, religious institutions, schools, and other community centers, we determined where the local residents frequently visit. We supplemented our site assessments through interviews with leaders in the community to discuss the impact of cultural diversity in the area. During the interviews, we had one team member as the facilitator for the questions, and two other members taking different sets of notes to examine the setting of the meeting and the material being discussed. Examples of the topics that we covered are listed below:

- How cultural diversity impacts a community
- What can be done to embrace cultural diversity in the community
- How the participants became involved with the Culture Houses
- Which social media platforms the participants used
- Demographics of the different groups in the community
- If the participants had other points of contacts for us to interview

An outline of the questions asked during interviews can be found in Appendix H. Finally, we identified how the Culture Houses’ staff advertised their events with social media, posters, and fliers.

Objective 4: Develop recommendations to improve the logistics and content of the Culture Houses’ events

This objective was about analyzing and synthesizing the data from the previous objectives so that we could understand the framework of the Culture Houses’ events. We analyzed our quantitative survey data to identify trends in the responses and compiled the data into graphs and charts. Furthermore, after gathering field notes from both our informal interviews during the events and our structured interviews in the community, we coded the data to pinpoint significant words, phrases, and trends. Instead of just ‘counting words’, we identified similarities and differences within the data and tried to understand the thoughts and opinions of the participants through their responses.
Chapter 4 Results and Discussion

Demographics of the Attendees at the Cultural Events

Through our observations at three Culture Wednesday and four Family Saturday events, we learned that the adult attendees tended to be female (two-thirds), with children (half male and half female). The age of the attendees varied at both Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events. Culture Wednesdays generally attracted older individuals, with 79% of survey participants between the ages of 50 and 80 years old. Family Saturdays more frequently saw 30-50 year-old adults/parents (63%), and grandparents/elderly participants (31%).

The attendance for each event varied, but on average Culture Wednesday events at Gerðarsafn Art Museum had 15 to 20 people and events at Salurinn Concert Hall had 40 to 50. At Family Saturday events the attendance on average was 30 to 50 people.

Four Saturday events and three Wednesday events that we attended were held in the Icelandic language, but during the two singing events that we observed, performers sang in other languages including Spanish, Greek, and English. We did not observe the Polish language being used at any of the events we attended.

Our research on the nationalities of the 53 attendees at the Family Saturday and Culture Wednesday events revealed that 49 of the attendees were Icelandic, 1 was Polish, and 3 were other nationalities. When looking at the participants who were of Icelandic nationality, about 84% percent of them spoke English as a second language and the rest spoke another language. Also, the one participant who was Polish responded that they spoke both English and Icelandic.

In addition to basic demographics, we researched the use of different social networking media. From surveys on Family Saturdays, 73% of the participants reported they used Facebook every day making it the
most commonly used social media platform. Instagram was the second most commonly used platform at 58%. A more detailed chart can be found in Appendix H.

When measuring past attendance at Family Saturdays, around 67%, or two thirds of the survey participants, had been to an event in the past three months. This also implies that one third of the current attendees at events are either new or attend events only once every year (Figure 18).

When asked if they would recommend the Family Saturday events to others, all 25 survey participants answered yes. These participants also answered ‘somewhat likely’ or ‘extremely likely’ when asked if they would attend another Family Saturday event.

Our surveys, represented by Figure 19, shows a majority of the participants at Culture House events live in the town of Kópavogur but there were a couple of participants from outside the town.

Figure 18: Chart of Family Saturday respondents’ past attendance.

Figure 19: Chart of survey participants’ regions at Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events.
Experiences of Attendees during the Cultural Events

We compiled data on attendees’ experiences from 62 individuals collected through interview responses and open-ended survey questions.

Family Saturday events, allowed children to be creative, make their own choices, and have fun. A guest stated, “it is important to let kids go and have freedom” (interview response, September 7, 2019). Children had opportunities to meet and interact with other children by participating in the arts. Parents could either engage in the activities with their children or simply relax in the child-friendly environment. On the other hand, Culture Wednesday events were less interactive and targeted towards an older audience. These events consisted of learning about and appreciating culture; for example, we observed an opera-style concert, an informational art walk, and an environmental presentation.

Guests had a variety of motives behind attending events including interest in the activities, learning about different cultures, trying new things, or simply attending the event for enjoyment. One guest stated that “no planning ahead or cleaning up” is a major reason she attends the events (interview responses, August 31, 2019). Figure 20 shows the number of responses we received corresponding with each reason for attending. The factors listed as ‘Other’ included, visiting family, visiting because of the knitting club, visiting to bounce on the trampoline with their children, and visiting because they had nothing to do. Additionally, some of the guests attending the events, who had no prior knowledge of the Culture Houses weekly events, happened to be visiting the Culture Houses coincidentally during that time.

When asked about community interactions, one guest stated that at events, “you see people several times, [and] get to know them” (interview response, September 4, 2019) However, at Family Saturday events, we observed that families did not often interact with other families. To this point, one guest described being “more focused on [their] family than meeting new people” (interview response, August 31, 2019). Another guest also mentioned that participants tend to separate based off age (interview response, August 31, 2019). Similar trends were observed during Culture Wednesdays where guests typically only interacted with the friends and family members they attended with.

Nine attendees mentioned that they were very happy with the opportunities for learning at the events. Two thought the events were great for both children and adults, while one thought the events were oriented more around entertainment than education. Many adults said that they would not attend the events, other than with their children, because they found the events to be less interesting for themselves. However, not all
Family Saturday events were focused on only teaching culture to children. Figure 21 illustrates an example of a Family Saturday event presentation on parenting and boosting children’s self-confidence, which was designed for both adults and children.

Thirty-three guests responded how they learned about the weekly events through interviews and surveys. Twenty-three said that they learned about the weekly event on Facebook. Ten also said that they learned about the event through brochures—either received in the mail or picked up at the Culture Houses. Figure 22 shows this data along with an additional eight guests who learned about the events through the Kópavogur daily newspaper, family and friends, or the news. Out of the thirty-three respondents, eight had multiple methods for learning about the events and therefore fall into multiple categories.

Ten interviewees responded saying they had no suggestions for improvements at the events and many other guests who were given surveys left the improvement question blank. Another interviewee thought that the events should have more active participation or be held outside (interview response, August 31, 2019). Participants suggested language help sessions, and signs or interpreters to assist at these events. Another general suggestion that came up frequently was that the library should provide more audio books and book readings to help younger children before they can read. Ten out of thirteen Facebook survey respondents stated that childcare would increase their interest in attending Culture House events.
External Perceptions of the Culture Houses in the Community

Understanding how the public perceives the Culture Houses is an important factor to consider when enhancing the organization’s involvement with the community. The Culture Houses promote their events through posters, brochures, and social media to reach out to the local community. These posters are put up in the main entrances of the buildings to advertise the cultural events; the posters are mainly in Icelandic with some English translation. There are brochures available at the front desks and tables in the buildings for visitors to take with them. The Culture Houses social media pages post upcoming events and pictures from past events to entice more residents to attend the events. The Culture Houses have websites for each building and one collaborative website with sections for each individual building.

To understand what local organizations and their attendees thought of the Culture Houses, we interviewed community leaders of these organizations that locals tend to visit. These organizations gave us insight into several dimensions of the Culture Houses. First, on how these community leaders promote community involvement, and how they perceive cultural diversity in the area. Additionally, we also discussed how the arts affect culture, and how the Culture Houses served the community. Different organizations in the community have had past associations with the Culture Houses and are eager to continue collaborations for the future.

The first public organization we visited was an art gallery, **Midpunkt**, which has been in the community for almost a year and holds visual art exhibits open to the public. We attended several of their visual arts exhibits produced by artists from different countries around the world. When asked about their vision for their business, the owners stated that, “[people] want something that’s going on with new ideas… a place where [these ideas] are happening” and that they saw Midpunkt as a place to serve this purpose in the community (interview response, September 5, 2019). Midpunkt also has good relations with the Culture Houses, for example, the two organizations co-hosted a Polish/Icelandic festival. Both organizations appear to reach a similar audience.

In our interviews, the Midpunkt owners confirmed that culture can be used as a medium for mutual understanding between different cultures. In their eyes, art can be used to communicate without words. When looking at the community, the owners noted how the Polish and Icelandic groups do not seem very integrated. They felt that individuals tend to associate themselves with those who have similar cultural backgrounds. They also noted that the Polish may think they are secondary in society and that Icelanders might also think this way—that they are above the Polish.

To further understand these perceptions of the community, we visited Kópavogskirkja, a church near the Culture Houses led by Pastor Sigurður Arnarson. During a tour of the church, Pastor Sigurður showed us...
stained-glass windows designed by Gerður Helgadóttir which depicted each stage of Jesus Christ’s life. The pastor used these windows to illustrate how religion can be taught through art. Although the church services were held in the Icelandic language, the church welcomed different nationalities by offering their sermons to the public. Pastor Sigurður stated that the church served the whole community, performing formal services, such as weddings and baptisms, for all Icelanders, new and old. He believed that diversity strengthens the community, and positively impacted his parish specifically. To develop solidarity, the church has held classes to educate guests on different religions to build tolerance in the parish. Pastor Sigurður realized Iceland was opening up, allowing in different types of religions and backgrounds, and expressed a need for a mutual understanding within the community. Pastor Sigurður also started off our snowball sampling method for the following organizations.

We met with teachers of a local Kindergarten school, Marbakki, to discuss cultural diversity in the classroom. The teachers described how they have held multicultural weeks where the students spent their class time learning about cultural diversity. They believe these lessons are important to develop open-mindedness in their students.

Most of the students are Icelandic, but there is still a small percentage of children from New Icelandic families. These students try to learn and speak Icelandic with their teachers, but often rely on images to convey different ideas to their teachers. The school is also a part of the Erasmus program, where project workers come to Iceland and Icelandic workers travel abroad to collaborate on ideas for their curriculum. Furthermore, older students can apply to study abroad through this program early on.

The Kindergarten school has a fundamental view that arts education allows a hands-on experience for the children to build from their own ideas and explore their interests. One teacher stated that, “learning is a lot, you have to be a human being” (interview response, September 12, 2019). The teachers allow their students to choose what topics they would like to learn. This connection between culture, art, and self is part of the reason the staff at the school enjoy the events at the Culture Houses. The staff also
believes that by working closely with the students, the Culture Houses might get more parents involved in their events.

After this meeting, we spoke with choir directors from a local primary school, Kársnesskóli. They explained how singing in a choir is a tradition that runs deeply in Iceland, and how this art form is, “very constructive for bringing students together” (interview response, September 18, 2019). The choir directors noted how Icelandic people are embracing the New Icelanders and believe that singing songs can help teach these groups new languages. The students do not always sing in Icelandic, but often sing in different languages that none of the children are familiar with. So, the students learn by sounding out the words and figuring out the lyrics together. Likewise, during an international concert, the choir directors described an instance where Russian students began singing a song, and then other students of different nationalities joined in, singing the same song in their native languages. The choir has used the space at the Salurinn Concert Hall in the past, however the directors explained how the space was too expensive to rent out with their current budget.

A local music school director from Skólahljómsveit Kópavogs also agreed that music helps community involvement because musicians must work together in a band. He expressed that, “everyone has a chance to be an individual” in the band which leads to a more personal relationship with the school (interview response, September 25, 2019). The music school sees many New Icelandic students applying, and prides themselves on their no bullying policy. In addition to this, their band travels abroad to “live in the culture of the countries that they visit and learn from their experiences” (interview response, September 25, 2019). They hold concerts and events for the community throughout the year. The band expressed an interest in using the space at the Salurinn Concert Hall, although the space is typically only for professional use.

In the interviews, the choir directors and Marbakki mentioned that they have translators onsite to assist during parent-teacher conferences. Furthermore, both the band and choir directors also found that emails sent in English had a better response rate from New Icelandic families. The choir directors further explained that some families do not try to integrate into Icelandic communities if their family is only staying for a few years. The directors thought that because of this, some families do not learn Icelandic, which may make their children feel like they do not belong in the community. The Kindergarten teachers and band director thought that parents are more interested in different cultures when it comes to what their children are learning about in school. For instance, a parent would be more inclined to learn about different cultures if they were learning it along with their children. Additionally, most of the organizations we interviewed use Facebook to promote their services to the community.
Discussion

Despite some limitations during our data collection, we identified a variety of trends involving both the Culture Houses’ events and the residents of Kópavogur. One of the major trends involving the events is the noticeable absence of individuals from two age groups, 18-30 year-olds and 50-60 year-olds. This absence could possibly be attributed to the events not being tailored towards their schedules and interests. For example, Family Saturdays, as shown by the interview responses and observations, are designed for parents to interact with their younger children, which leaves out those who do not have children or those with older children who do not want to participate. The 50-60 year old group may also have older children who have moved out or are attending a university, so these events would not be of interest to these older adults or their children. Similarly, based on our experiences and tendencies of students at our own university, we surmise that the 18-30 year-olds are not interested in events involving younger children and family interactions.

Regarding Culture Wednesdays, the time for these events are during the middle of the day, when young adults are most likely at work or in school. Similarly, the 50-60 year-olds are also likely at work during this time. Therefore, this event schedule is possibly making it more difficult for both groups to attend events because it would disrupt their workday. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the 50-60 age group is less likely to connect with their community, other than through their work or family. The weekly events present a potential opportunity for this age group to become more involved with the community, promoting a sense of purpose and belonging. It may also be important to get the young adults involved with the community to develop a support network and alleviate self-esteem issues in these individuals.

While the events are well designed to accommodate for a culturally rich learning environment, hosting a majority of the events in the Icelandic language does not welcome all of the diverse groups in Kópavogur. Family Saturdays and Culture Wednesdays are less accessible to New Icelanders and other non-Icelandic speaking residents when they are held strictly in Icelandic. Many events are stated to be held in both Icelandic and English but of the events that we have attended, this was not always the case. The staff typically ask the guests before the event whether or not all of the guests would prefer the event in Icelandic or English. Unfortunately, non-Icelandic speakers (or those with weak Icelandic language skills) may not speak up, likely due to social pressures that could make these individuals feel like outsiders. Additionally, while many pamphlets at the Culture Houses are provided in both Icelandic and English, brochures sent out to the residents of Kópavogur about the cultural events are only written in the Icelandic language. It is unlikely that New Icelanders will attend events promoted and presented in a language they do not speak, despite the multicultural experiences held at the events.

At both Wednesday and Saturday events, guests often only interacted with those they attended with and had limited interactions with other guests. This observation deviates from the Culture Houses’ message of creating a feeling of a ‘second home’ where you can experience new topics while interacting with others. Due to the limited interaction, the attendees are less likely to meet new people, which lessens community involvement. Another effect of this lack of interaction is that individuals may not consider the perspectives of others’ while learning and appreciating different aspects of a cultural topic. This could hinder others from experiencing the full cultural integration provided by the events. During Family Saturdays, children and parents tend to stick together, not connecting with other families. If children were to participate with
other children in cultural activities, they could build relationships and consequently promote interactions between their parents. This would potentially lead to those families attending future events together, as well as telling their friends creating a snowball effect which brings in more of the community to the Culture Houses.

A different trend, developed from our observations of the Culture Houses and interactions with community leaders, exposed the under-utilization of the Salurinn Concert Hall as a public space. We have observed the Culture Houses being used as gathering spaces for the community, but have not observed as much activity at the concert hall except for scheduled events. In a six month review of the concert hall’s current schedule (October to March), we found that there is a total of eleven events, ten concerts and one Culture Wednesday event. While one concert and Culture Wednesday event are during the afternoon, nine of the concerts are after 19:00 (Salurinn, 2019). We understand that Salurinn needs to maintain its professional atmosphere, however there are still many hours where it appears to not be in use. By offering the space to the community, Salurinn would be better able to reach out to the local citizens. Opening up Salurinn to the community would promote the idea that the Culture Houses are a gathering space for the public’s use. In fact, interviews with the Skólahljómsveit Kópavogs music school and the Kársnesskóli primary school indicated that those organizations would love to use the space. These student music groups would like to pursue closer relationships with the concert hall but feel as though they are unable to because of the concert hall’s policies and high rental costs. These groups have the potential of drawing in more diverse crowds from their own organizations which would enhance the demographics of the Culture Houses’ events. Overall, there are different facets to the Culture Houses that could be expanded or improved in order to better promote their image as a ‘second home’ to the Kópavogur community. The Culture Houses could see an overall increase in their attendance and participation with a few adaptations to their organization.
Chapter 5 Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

Enhance Social Media Presence

1. Advertise the Culture Houses’ Facebook and Instagram pages on posters located in each of the buildings’ foyers.

Our survey and interview results indicated that some attendees who visit the Culture Houses are not aware of the events that are hosted. Creating posters that advertise these pages could help to increase event awareness. Currently, the Culture Houses advertise their Facebook and Instagram pages on some of their brochures and their website. Posters should be placed in the foyers of the buildings and should explain how the visitors can view upcoming events on the Culture Houses’ Facebook and Instagram pages.

2. Create Facebook groups for both Culture Wednesdays and Family Saturdays that attendees can join and utilize.

One guest suggested the creation of Facebook groups for the Culture Wednesday and Family Saturday events. Within these groups, attendees would be able to check their availability to attend the upcoming events they are interested in. Creating these Facebook groups would provide a space for attendees to generate discussion about the events. The groups should be promoted on the Culture Houses’ main Facebook page. These Facebook groups should be updated every week with the most current events in order to inform attendees of future events and create more awareness of the Culture Houses’ weekly activities.

Collect Additional Participant and Community Data

3. Create polls on Facebook to gather peoples’ opinions on upcoming events.

Providing attendees with polls through Facebook would allow the staff to collect feedback from their guests, similar to how local schools increase student engagement. Facebook polls should assess which cultural topics attendees would be most interested in to better tailor events to the audience. The poll should be posted on Facebook every four months with potential event topics to choose from. When the poll closes, the top four selected topics should be incorporated into the event schedule in the following four months.

4. Create a permanent survey for event feedback.

General feedback from guests is important for the Culture Houses to keep track of and understand their guests’ experiences and interests. The survey would provide more general questions involving demographics, reasons for attending, and availability. By implementing a permanent survey on either their website or Facebook page, the Culture Houses would be able to continuously receive feedback from their guests. This feedback should allow the Culture Houses to adapt their programs and facilities to better serve their audience by giving them a more appealing and accommodating cultural experience.
Collaborate with Organizations in the Community

5. Collaborate on exhibits with Midpunkt.

The owners of Midpunkt expressed their hopes of a future ‘symbiotic relationship’ with the Culture Houses. Through shared installations of art exhibits, Midpunkt has the potential to become a temporary branch for the Culture Houses to display some of their more extensive art pieces. Partnering with Midpunkt, who serves as a community space for new ideas, should help the Culture Houses become more involved in the community. Branching out into the community and using the Midpunkt space should help promote and increase interest in the Culture Houses within the community.

6. Host events involving the Kópavogskirkja.

The pastor of the Kópavogskirkja mentioned an interest in becoming more involved with events at the Culture Houses. Hosting selected Culture Wednesday events at the church should help bring the community closer together. These events should include visual arts and music concerts, as the church could serve as a fitting space for holding these events. Another example, would be holding Sunday events with classes on different religions or discussions on how art and religion work together. A Sunday event following a church sermon would introduce different members of the congregation to the Culture Houses. The church includes a diverse group in terms of ages and cultural backgrounds, and this collaboration should help the Culture Houses’ events reach a more diverse audience.

7. Distribute informational cards to parents at Marbakki Kindergarten.

Teachers at Marbakki suggested creating informational cards detailing the Family Saturday events with the topics, dates, and times of that week. These cards could then be distributed to the parents of the students at Marbakki Kindergarten at the beginning of each week, inviting their families to and spreading awareness of the Culture Houses’ weekly events. The cards will help the Culture Houses reach out to more families in Kópavogur, including New Icelandic families, who have children enrolled in the school. An example of this card is located in Appendix I.

8. Allow music groups to use the Salurinn Concert Hall as a resource.

Local music groups in the community have expressed an interest in using the Salurinn Concert Hall but reflected that they have been discouraged from using the space, and found that reserving the space in the hall is too expensive. Offering time during the day for recreational use with either free admission or low cost (janitorial/doorman fees) for these groups would promote Salurinn as a welcoming space. The choir directors and the concert band director gave examples of events they would like to see held in Salurinn including group practices, music lessons, and general recreation. Amateur arts are a big force in the community, so it is important for the Culture Houses to increase community relations by allowing local artists and groups to use Salurinn for creative expression. By increasing these community relations, the Culture Houses will be able to attract more attendees to their events.

9. Create a musical event that utilizes the Salurinn Concert Hall.

Because our research shows that musical events are well received by current attendees, we suggest an implementation of an event at Salurinn where local groups perform in the concert hall for the public. These
events should include concerts, plays, and sing-alongs for students, and be held every month on a weekday night. This way the event allots time for Salurinn’s other events during the month, and would not interfere with students’ school schedules. Not only should this enhance the image of the Culture Houses as a community resource, but this inclusion of Salurinn could draw in different families to the events that their children perform in. In turn, the families could be exposed to the other weekly events held at the Culture Houses through promotional material found in Salurinn. We believe this event should also draw in more teenagers and young adults to the Culture Houses, along with the families of the students.

10. Create a virtual reality exhibit showcasing the archived Gerðarsafn Museum artwork.

We recommend that the Culture Houses create a permanent virtual reality exhibit for the Gerðarsafn Art Museum. A virtual reality exhibit would consist of photographing archived artwork and creating a virtual exhibit that would allow guests to view the stored work. We believe that this would not only allow the artwork to be appreciated by a greater audience, but the implementation of this technology should help generate interest among both the 18-30 and 50-60 year old age groups. The Culture Houses would need to look into working with an outside organization to set up this exhibit, such as the Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art who have started to develop virtual reality exhibits, or potentially develop a future project with a student group.

Improve Community Relations

11. Provide paired family events that encourage interactions between families to increase community integration.

An event which focuses on interacting with new people through cultural activities would help address the lack of engagement between families, and inactive participation described by interviewees at Family Saturday events. An example would be an event at the Gerðarsafn Art Museum where two families are paired together to create one work of art. Parents would help all of the children in their group work together on a collective art piece, causing personal interactions between parents and children of different families. Another possible event is storytelling where two families are paired together and all of the adults take turns reading to the children. By having children of different families participate in activities together, the parents of these children should interact as well.

12. Host more events in English.

During limited events, the Culture Houses have an option to hold events in English instead of Icelandic, but this only occurs when non-Icelandic speaking guests are present. Because most attendees spoke English as a second language, more events should be advertised and held in English to accommodate New Icelanders who may not speak Icelandic. If events were held in English, both current Icelandic attendees and New Icelanders should be able to understand the event. New Icelanders have a better response rate when they have help with language barriers, so they would likely attend these events. New and regular attendees could share their experiences at these events, helping unfamiliar community members understand each other through a common cultural medium.
13. Create a childcare program so that adults can attend events.

The Culture Houses should provide a childcare service during Culture Wednesday and the more mature events. As our surveys showed, parents were more inclined to attend events if the Culture Houses provided childcare. The children would be dropped off at the children's section of the library where the Culture Houses’ staff would be available to watch the children. This recommendation would provide a way for parents to relax and participate in these events when they would usually be worried about looking after their children. New staff may need to be hired in order to provide this childcare.

Attract Underrepresented Attendees

14. Create events specifically for the 18-30 year-old age group to increase their attendance.

Our survey and observational data clearly demonstrated that a majority of 18-30 year-olds are not attending events. Creating events specifically tailored towards the 18-30 age group should bring them to the Culture Houses. For example, a movie night event would include free admission to a feature film and introduce a new candy or snack from a different culture to enjoy while watching. Another event we suggest is a comedy night because these types of events at our university have been successful. We have observed that young adults enjoy watching professional comedians and student improvisational groups. Additional event ideas might include virtual reality experiences, sports presentations, jewelry making, financial planning, and motivational speakers. If the resources are available, these events should be presented monthly.

15. Create events specifically for the 50-60 year-old age group to increase their attendance.

Because our survey and observational data demonstrated that 50-60 year-olds are not attending events, holding an event based on this group’s availability should help attract this audience. One possibility would be evening events after the work day. One idea for this is a ‘Speed-Friending Night’, a spinoff of speed dating, which would help create more interactions between strangers in this older group. Another event should include groups that pair up for activities that revolve around the Culture Houses themselves, similar to the ‘Cultural Scavenger Hunts’ for children. This event would also expose the attendees to promotional material for other weekly events at the Culture Houses. A third idea is to host a painting class during a weekday night. Unlike the craft projects for the children on Family Saturdays, this class would be a mature event where adult attendees can choose their level of involvement. The lesson would be focused on a single piece or artistic style which all attendees follow as a group. If the resources are available, these events should be presented monthly.

16. Provide Icelandic language learning events to increase New Icelanders community involvement.

According to our interviews, New Icelanders have difficulties learning the Icelandic language so, an event which helps individuals learn the Icelandic language should be implemented. These events would be held once a month in order to practice and reinforce the language skills previous attendees have gained in the past. By learning the Icelandic language, New Icelanders could experience new opportunities that were previously hindered by language barriers, including most of the Culture Houses’ events.
Conclusion

Community involvement through cultural appreciation is key to enhancing the Culture Houses’ image as a safe, diverse, and culturally stimulating resource for Kópavogur. This makes our project at the Culture Houses important for evaluating the staff’s progress in reaching out to diverse groups in the community. Our project set out to assess the current cultural events by identifying trends in the demographics and experiences of the attendees. These trends along with external perceptions of local organizations’ leaders gave insight to the Culture Houses’ current efforts in reaching out to the community.

Our recommendations will promote the community involvement of the Culture Houses in the Kópavogur area. By incorporating the Culture Houses and their events into the Kópavogur community, New Icelandic families will be more exposed to the resources the Culture Houses have to offer. Culture Houses’ events can bring together the different groups of Native and New Icelanders bridging the gap through new cultural activities. The Culture Houses will reach a broader audience with events that are enticing to people of all different backgrounds.
References


Design (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.iceland.is/arts-culture/design


Visit Reykjavík. Culture Hill. Retrieved from https://visitreykjavik.is/culture-hill


*Any Figures without citation were taken or produced by our project team*
## Appendices

### Appendix A

**United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

Here is a link to the full definitions: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300)  
(United Nations Department of Public Information, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Poverty</th>
<th>1.) No Poverty</th>
<th>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good Health and Well-Being</td>
<td>3.) Good Health and Well-Being</td>
<td>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</td>
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<td>Quality Education</td>
<td>4.) Quality Education</td>
<td>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</td>
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<td>Gender Equality</td>
<td>5.) Gender Equality</td>
<td>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</td>
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<td>Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>6.) Clean Water and Sanitation</td>
<td>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decent Work and Economic Growth</td>
<td>8.) Decent Work and Economic Growth</td>
<td>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>9.) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</td>
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<td>Reduced Inequalities</td>
<td>10.) Reduced Inequalities</td>
<td>Reduce inequality within and among countries</td>
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<td>Sustainable Cities and Communities</td>
<td>11.) Sustainable Cities and Communities</td>
<td>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</td>
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<td>Responsible Consumption and Production</td>
<td>12.) Responsible Consumption and Production</td>
<td>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</td>
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<td>Life Below Water</td>
<td>14.) Life Below Water</td>
<td>Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</td>
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<td>Life on Land</td>
<td>15.) Life on Land</td>
<td>Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</td>
<td>16.) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</td>
<td>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships for the Goals</td>
<td>17.) Partnerships for the Goals</td>
<td>Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</td>
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Appendix B

Electronic survey for attendees at Family Saturday Events.

Survey is in both English and Icelandic.

Link to the survey: http://wpi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3QX8azHHp1WpMrj
How often do you attend Family Saturday events?
- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- This is my first time

Which days would you prefer Culture Houses host Family Saturday events? Choose all that apply.
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

What times on these days would you prefer to attend Family Saturday events? Choose all that apply.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning (9:00 - 12:00)</th>
<th>Afternoon (12:00 - 17:00)</th>
<th>Evening (17:00 - 21:00)</th>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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How likely are you to attend another Family Saturday event?

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<tr>
<th>Future Attendance</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat unlikely</th>
<th>Extremely unlikely</th>
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Will you recommend the Family Saturday events to a friend or colleague?
- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Do you have any suggestions on how the Culture Houses could improve their cultural events?


Rank these social media platforms by how often you use them. **1 being everyday and 5 being once a month.**

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<td>Pinterest</td>
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**Gender**

- Male
- Female
- Other [ ]

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**Age**

- 18-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60-70
- 70-80
- 80+
- 80+
Nationality
- Icelandic
- Polish
- Other

What language do you regularly speak at home?
- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Are there any other languages you speak? Choose all that apply.
- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Number of children
- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

Thank you for your time!

If you have additional questions about the survey, or would like to withdraw your information from our database after your submission, please feel free to email our group through our team alias gA19culture@wpi.edu. You may also email our advisors Fred Looft (fjlooft@wpi.edu) and Ingrid Shockey (ishockey@wpi.edu). Or contact the IRB office at our campus irb@wpi.edu.
Appendix C

Electronic survey for attendees at Culture Wednesday Events.

Survey is in both English and Icelandic.

Link to the survey:  [http://wpi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4UcH4Do5RLvIX65](http://wpi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4UcH4Do5RLvIX65)

---

We are a student team from WPI, a university in America, and we are working on a project for the Culture Houses of Köpavogur. We would like to ask you a few questions on basic demographics and the cultural events to understand how the events can be improved. This survey will take about 3-5 minutes to complete.

*Your information will be confidential, and shared only for the purpose mentioned. You do not need to give your personal information, and you are free to stop, skip or refuse to answer any questions during the survey.*

To attend this event today, which region did you come from?

- Köpavogur
- Reykjavik
- Garðabær
- Álftanes
- Hafnarfjörður
- Other: __________

Approximately how far away from Culture Houses do you live?

- 5-10 minutes
- 10-20 minutes
- 20-30 minutes
- 30-60 minutes
- More than 60 minutes

How did you hear about this event?

- Friend
- Family Member
- Work colleague
- Online (Culture Houses’ Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, other social media)
- Culture House Mailing list
- Other: __________
How often do you attend Culture Wednesday events?
- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- This is my first time

Which days would you prefer Culture Houses host Culture Wednesday events? Choose all that apply.
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

What times on these days would you prefer to attend Culture Wednesday events? Choose all that apply.

<table>
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<th>Morning (9:00 - 12:00)</th>
<th>Afternoon (12:00 - 17:00)</th>
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<td>Friday</td>
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</table>

How likely are you to attend another Culture Wednesday event?
- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neutral
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Will you recommend the Culture Wednesday events to a friend or colleague?
- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Do you have any suggestions on how the Culture Houses could improve their cultural events?
Rank these social media platforms by how often you use them. **1 being everyday and 5 being once a month.**

- Snapchat
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Youtube
- Pinterest

---

**Gender**
- Male
- Female
- Other

---

**Age**
- 18-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60-70
- 70-80
- 80+
Nationality

- Icelandic
- Polish
- Other

What language do you regularly speak at home?

- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Are there any other languages you speak? Choose all that apply.

- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Number of children

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

Thank you for your time!

If you have additional questions about the survey, or would like to withdraw your information from our database after your submission, please feel free to email our group through our team alias gr-A19culture@wpi.edu. You may also email our advisors Fred Looft (fjlloft@wpi.edu) and Ingrid Shockey (ishockey@wpi.edu). Or contact the IRB office at our campus irb@wpi.edu.
Appendix D

Electronic survey for Facebook page.

Survey is in both English and Icelandic.

Link to the survey:  http://wpi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9um3RrdBcI0qB4p
The Culture Houses of Kópavogur provide weekly and monthly community events at the 5 locations of their organization. These locations include The Gerðarsafn, the Natural History Museum, the Kópavogur Public Library, the Salurinn Concert Hall, and the Kópavogur Archives. Two of the main weekly events are focused on Saturday Family Workshops and Culture Wednesdays (Mennin á Móvikudögum). The topics of these events vary from music lessons, art and crafts, science and technology explorations, and many other diverse subjects. These events usually last 40 minutes to 2 hours.

Have you heard about these events at the Culture Houses?

- Yes
- No

If the participant answers yes, the following question is shown:

**How did you hear about these events?**
- Friend
- Family Member
- Work colleague
- Online (Culture Houses’ Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, other social media)
- Radio
- Culture House Mailing list
- Other: ___________

**How often do you attend cultural events at the Culture Houses of Kópavogur?**
- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once a year
- Never

What are the best times for the Culture Houses to be open for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Opening Time</th>
<th>Closing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerðarsafn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural History Museum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kópavogur Public Library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salurinn Concert Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kópavogur Archives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the participant chooses any answer other than never, the following 3 questions are shown:

In efforts to provide quality education, how would you describe the learning experience at the Culture Houses’ events?

How have you observed the Culture Houses to be inclusive of all people in the community?

How do the Culture Houses of Kópavogur incorporate cultural diversity into their events? Are there any certain events you can think of?

How would describe cultural diversity in Kópavogur? Are there any certain locations or events you associate with cultural diversity?

What kind of activities would you be interested in at Culture House community events (Music, Dance, Art, Math and Science, Language)?
How likely are you to attend a cultural event at the Culture Houses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Attendance</th>
<th>Extremely likely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat unlikely</th>
<th>Extremely unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What events, clubs, or activities are you involved in the community?


Would you recommend these cultural events to a friend or colleague?

- O Yes
- O Maybe
- O No

If child care or a separate event for children was offered, would your interest in attending Culture House events increase?

- O Yes
- O No
Rank these social media platforms by how often you use them. 1 being everyday and 5 being once a month.

1 2 3 4 5  Never

Snapchat
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Youtube
Pinterest

Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other

Age
☐ 18-30
☐ 30-40
☐ 40-50
☐ 50-60
☐ 60-70
☐ 70-80
☐ 80+
Nationality
- Icelandic
- Polish
- Other

What language do you regularly speak at home?
- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Are there any other languages you speak? Choose all that apply.
- Icelandic
- English
- Polish
- Other

Number of children
- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

We are looking to conduct interviews and focus groups gathering more information on the Culture Houses of Kópavogur. If you have the time, we would be greatly appreciate hearing more of your thoughts. Please leave your email address below if you are interested.

Thank you for your time!

If you have additional questions about the survey, or would like to withdraw your information from our database after your submission, please feel free to email our group through our team alias gr-A19culture@wpi.edu. You may also email our advisors Fred Looft (fjlooft@wpi.edu) and Ingrid Shockey (ishockey@wpi.edu). Or contact the IRB office at our campus irb@wpi.edu.
Appendix E

Paper survey for current attendees at Family Saturday and Culture Wednesday events.

Survey is in both English and Icelandic.

Hello! We are a student group from America working with the Culture Houses of Kópavogur to assess your opinions of the weekly cultural events. Please answer these short demographic questions to help our team understand the cultural diversity within these events. Your information will remain confidential, and you are free to retract your survey or refrain from answering any questions. Thank you for giving us your time!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>○ 18-30</th>
<th>○ 30-40</th>
<th>○ 40-50</th>
<th>○ 50-60</th>
<th>○ 60-70</th>
<th>○ 70-80</th>
<th>○ 80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>○ Female</td>
<td>○ Male</td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>○ Icelandic</td>
<td>○ Polish</td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>○ Icelandic</td>
<td>○ English</td>
<td>○ Polish</td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for attending event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements for the Culture Houses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We would love to learn about your experience. If you want to provide more information in an in-depth interview, please leave your email here:
Appendix F

Interview guide for event attendees

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the United States tasked to learn about the visitors of the Culture Houses. We would like to understand your motives behind attending these events, how you learned about these events, and other general background questions. This information will be used to improve the events and atmosphere of the Culture Houses to increase attendance and create another gathering space for the community.

*Your information will be confidential, and shared only for the purpose mentioned. You do not need to give your personal information, and you are free to stop or refuse to answer any questions during the interview.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following questions serve to direct the conversation of the interview.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever attended these weekly events before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o How often do you attend these events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you hear about this event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about the Culture Houses’ events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you attend this event today? (money, distance, something to do, art?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How interesting were the activities that were provided today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What made you interested (or not interested) in the topics covered today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What aspects of culture are you interested in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What topics would you like to see covered at an event in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you attend these events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Are there any factors that would make you more likely to attend the Culture Houses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What different aspects of the event did you enjoy (the length of the event, the atmosphere, family oriented, program staff, learning experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you find the Culture Houses to be family oriented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What aspects of the Culture Houses do you find to be family oriented? childcare?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When are your preferred events and times for visiting the Culture Houses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Are morning, afternoon, or evening events more preferable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Why are these times more preferable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could the event have been improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to attend future events at the Culture Houses?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time!
Please feel free to contact us after this interview if you have additional questions or if you would like your information to be removed from our database. Email us at our team alias gr-A19culture. You may also email our advisors Fred Looft (fjloomt@wpi.edu) and Ingrid Shockey (ishockey@wpi.edu). Or contact the IRB office at our campus (irb@wpi.edu).
Appendix G

Interview Guidelines for Community Leaders

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university in the United States tasked to learn about the visitors of the Culture Houses. We would like to understand your motives behind attending these events, how you learned about these events, and your guest experience at these events. This information will be used to improve the events and atmosphere of the Culture Houses to increase attendance and create another gathering space for the community.

*Your information will be confidential, and shared only for the purpose mentioned. You do not need to give your personal information, and you are free to stop or refuse to answer any questions during the interview.*

The following questions serve to direct the conversation of the interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The following questions serve to direct the conversation of the interview.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe the demographics of your organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who do you serve in the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What age groups are involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does cultural diversity affect the Kópavogur community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does cultural diversity affect your organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do different forms of art relate to culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the organization get involved in the community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the organization been involved with the Culture Houses in the past? If so, explain how.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you be interested in future collaborations with the Culture Houses? What aspects would you like to see implemented if your organization would like to work with the Culture Houses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What social media does your organization use to promote events and updates?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time!
Please feel free to contact us after this interview if you have additional questions or if you would like your information to be removed from our database. Email us at our team alias gr-A19culture. You may also email our advisors Fred Looft (fjlooft@wpi.edu) and Ingrid Shockey (ishockey@wpi.edu). Or contact the IRB office at our campus ([irb@wpi.edu](mailto:irb@wpi.edu)).
## Appendix H

### Social Media Usage for Family Saturday Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>23.8% 5</td>
<td>4.8% 1</td>
<td>33.3% 7</td>
<td>4.8% 1</td>
<td>14.3% 3</td>
<td>19.0% 4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>72.7% 16</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>4.5% 1</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>18.2% 4</td>
<td>4.5% 1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>15.6% 3</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>5.3% 1</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>5.3% 1</td>
<td>73.7% 14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>57.6% 11</td>
<td>10.5% 2</td>
<td>5.3% 1</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>15.6% 3</td>
<td>10.5% 2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>30.0% 6</td>
<td>15.0% 3</td>
<td>35.0% 7</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
<td>10.0% 2</td>
<td>10.0% 2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>15.6% 3</td>
<td>10.5% 2</td>
<td>10.5% 2</td>
<td>10.0% 2</td>
<td>15.6% 3</td>
<td>36.8% 7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social Media Usage for Facebook Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>76.92% 10</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>15.38% 2</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>7.68% 1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>53.85% 7</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>46.15% 6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>53.85% 7</td>
<td>15.38% 2</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>30.77% 4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>30.77% 4</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>38.46% 5</td>
<td>15.38% 2</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>15.38% 2</td>
<td>69.23% 9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>0.00% 0</td>
<td>15.38% 2</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>7.69% 1</td>
<td>30.77% 4</td>
<td>38.46% 5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I
Marbakkí informational card example

Culture House: Family Saturday Events

Recycling workshop
Family event

Let’s recycle and create new from old!

05.10.2019 13:00
Náttúrfraðistofa Köpavogs

To catch the light workshop
Family event

Experiments with charcoal and a kneaded eraser!

12.10.2019 13:00
Gerðarsafn

@menningarhusinikopavogi
Culture Houses of Köpavogur, Hamraborg 4, 200 Köpavogur