ARCHnetwork: Net 5 Cyprus

Sustainable Development of Cultural & Natural Assets in 2 Cypriot Mountain Villages

September 26 – October 2

Collaborative work

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
We would all like to thank ARCHnetwork for the opportunity to participate with the Net 5 programme, developed by ARCH and funded through the EU Erasmus+ programme. During our time in Cyprus we were graciously hosted by the Kato Drys Municipality with mentors Panayiota Demetriou and Martin Clark. Their knowledge and passion for sharing cultural, historical and natural heritage was incredibly inspiring.

Thank you

“Under the current political mindset in the UK it is heartening to see programmes delivered through ARCHnetwork’s Erasmus+ programme, continuing the spirit of friendship, collaborative sharing and learning from different cultures”

The programme was linked to the European Development plans of ARCH and its consortium members (see above organisations)
## PARTICIPANTS + CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Position/Institution</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Lambert</td>
<td>Cumbernauld Living Landscape/Scottish Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Interpreting Our Cultural Past</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Hynek</td>
<td>Archaeology Scotland</td>
<td>An Archaeologist in Lefkara</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Tobias Oliver</td>
<td>Scottish Crannog Centre</td>
<td>Re-Imagining the Landscape: Connecting Communities Through Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Dickson</td>
<td>Trees for Life</td>
<td>Silversmiths in the Village of Lefkara</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay E Jolly</td>
<td>Freelance artist and web designer</td>
<td>The Importance of Maintaining Culture and the Issues Relating to Its Loss</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamshya Rajkumar</td>
<td>Woodland Trust</td>
<td>Continuing Cultures Built Around Intricacy: Lefkaritika + Green Village</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>METHODS OF DISSEMINATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpreting our cultural past
Tracy Lambert

There is always a feeling of anticipation when travelling, one of meeting new people, experiencing new cultures and learning and sharing knowledge and passions. I was very fortunate as a trainee in 2014 with Cumbernauld Living Landscape to have the opportunity to visit Kato Drys under the Leonardo Da Vinci programme. Where I learned how the people of Cyprus were learning about, and dealing with climate change, and the measures they were taking to deal with this danger to economic, cultural and natural heritage.

Now, as an experienced Project Officer with the Living Landscape, I am excited to return after 5 years for my first Erasmus+ structured programme. I hope to see the changes and learn even more about economic, cultural, environmental and social sustainability. On our journey to Pano Lefkara we discussed one of the topics explored 5 years ago 'Pano Drys' was brought up to the conclusion that after ~900 years Pano Drys has been found!

Let me explain – The village names in Cyprus have meanings, Kato – lower and Pano upper. Where you get one you get the other. For example, Pano Lefkara and Kato Lefkara however in the case of Kato Drys there is no Pano Drys. I saddened me to hear this 5 years ago, why was a village missing? what happened to it? when did it disappear? or was it simply a case that it was never built? Imagine my amazement when I heard that it had been found! But not only has it been found but the methods used to discover the lost village mirrored some of what I do in my role as a Project Officer and other methods that I could take forward in my role too.

Our host Martin described the use of drone technology to gain an aerial view of vegetation patterns, this is something are trying out for woodland management within Cumbernauld, but we have never thought to link it to historical land layouts. Ground surveys again we do, but we don't necessarily link these surveys to patterns and any historical importance. Finally the examining of old texts, oral stories passed through generations and a song. These clues passed each day as mundane, become the foundation of knowledge which proves the existence of an ancient village with its peoples, cultures and history.
Cumbernauld has a lot of history attached to the town and while most people think it is a recent new town, it is in fact linked in historical texts of Tacitus right back to at least 81 AD and the arrival of Agricola. We have an area in a local park called the Haha, a corridor set below the view of the main estates big house. This Haha was a walkway for the workers in the local mines to pass the house without being seen as the Lords and Ladies of the house did not wish for their view to be spoiled.

Using the techniques utilized for Pano Drys we may discover the full route with modern mapping and drone footage without impacting the environment (environmental sustainability), connect to our community through oral storytelling and study of old texts relating to Cumbernauld (social and cultural sustainability) and use what we learn in some way for social enterprise (guided tours, reenactments etc. for economic sustainability). Much will be dependent on funding (again economic sustainability). However, the Net 5 programme has planted a seed of what is possible. We can encourage the wider community to actively take part and become a stronger part of the town's future through understanding of its past, supporting the Green Village pillars of sustainability for Culture, economy, social and environment.
An Archaeologist in Lefkara
Megan Hynek

I trained as an archaeologist, gaining my Bachelors in 2014 and Masters in 2017, specializing in Byzantine mosaics. Although I have also excavated around the world on very different sites, I find myself drawn to the work itself. Archaeology, to me, has always been about storytelling, telling our common story despite physical, cultural, and temporal distance. Working at Archaeology Scotland, which supports public engagement in archaeology, has given me the opportunity to see how we can share and engage with cultural heritage, to inspire and to educate, rather than only to study. I wanted to learn how we can take that engagement work one step further. How can we utilize our archaeological heritage to help sustain and develop modern communities?

It came as no surprise when we arrived at the Roman city of Kourion, with its Hellenistic to early Byzantine mosaic floors, that I was enraptured. Kourion was a city-state with the earliest known population arriving around the 12th century BCE. The site went through six occupational phases, falling mostly out of use during the early 4th century CE following a
devastating earthquake. It was partially reconstructed in the latter 4\textsuperscript{th} / early 5\textsuperscript{th} century; however it was abandoned during the Arab raids of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century. Today, the city has been developed into an archaeological park, primarily focusing on the Early to mid-Byzantine materials (although in some locations, multiple earlier occupation layers can be seen).

The site functions primarily as a museum; visitors are able to walk among the archaeological ruins; some of which have been partially reconstructed, others left to their ruined state. There are small description plaques throughout the park giving the visitor some context about the ruins and their possible function. These were generally unobtrusive and informative. The mosaics themselves varied in their presentation. Some are exposed for the public to see in their original context, while others are covered with earth for preservation. I was disappointed that these covered mosaics did not have labels or photographs available. We were only made aware of them by Martin.

While we were exploring the site, Martin engaged us in discussion about how cultural materials have been used in a modern context and invited us to think about how this can be improved upon. The goal of this project in Cyprus was to see how the ‘Four Pillars of Sustainability’ (economic, environmental, cultural, and social) could be applied to our natural and material resources. In some ways, the archaeological park is already meeting these. The ancient theatre, for example, which has been partially restored functions as a modern theatre, putting on performances such as Shakespeare’s \textit{Othello} and \textit{Midsummer Night’s Dream}, both of which have connections to Cyprus. The theatre therefore brings people together, generates income, combines and celebrates both Cypriots’ cultural past, all while using an existing resource and making a very low environmental impact. Cypriots and international visitors are able to not only see the site but engage with it in a very similar manner to its original use. The layers of storytelling are palpable: the story of the Hellensitic theatre and the ancients who enjoyed it, the narrative of Shakespeare, and the modern people. These interweaving stories elevate both the site and one’s experience of it.

But what more could be done? Martin suggested some possibilities for this. Perhaps, since the site is heavily adorned in mosaic, there could be craft workshops in the park to teach visitors how to make mosaics themselves. This would provide them a tangible experience while they would be able to take a piece of the trip home with them. This type of craft could support the park economically which would in turn support more research and projects.

Of course, we must also exercise caution. The risk of ‘over-interpreting’ the site, giving the visitor a sense that we know more than we do could be an issue. In an effort to appear as the ‘expert,’ we don’t want to give false information as this would be irresponsible.

Returning now to Scotland and my work at Archaeology Scotland, I can see how we are already successfully implementing many of these goals and where we could continue to make strides. The mission of Archaeology Scotland is to promote, support and educate on all of the archaeology taking place in Scotland, from the most ancient to most recent. We share information about community excavations and interactive heritage events taking place during of Scottish Archaeology Month, offer training to communities through our Adopt-a-Monument scheme, loan archaeological kits to schools and attend events so that students can have a hands-on experience with their own history. These services are offered free of charge at no economic burden to the community. It is important that there are not financial
barriers to interacting with cultural knowledge and resources. While archaeological digs are inherently destructive to the built heritage, there is a very low environmental impact.

One area that we could do more of is creating opportunities for economic sustainability. As a charity, our focus is on providing services and support, rather than economic gain. As a result, we rely on grants and outside sources of funding to continue. This is something that I will bring back to Archaeology Scotland as a point of discussion.
Re-imagining the landscape: Connecting communities through cultural heritage
Jason Oliver

Choirokoitia is a Neolithic village, dated 7000 BC. It is located towards the southern coast of the island, on the side of a hill, cradled by the Maroni river. It was inhabited for over 1000 years and according to UNESCO, who has inscribed it as a World Heritage site, it is 'one of the most important prehistoric sites in the Eastern Mediterranean'. The houses, constructed of earth or sun-dried bricks are round, close together and seem to have a flat roof, with small windows. The houses were subdivided, depending on the use of each structure, such as a loft space, basins or hearths and also work or rest areas. The floor was also used for inhumation of dead people, so even after death, they were still considered part of the community. One of the most striking aspects of the site is the successive phases of the outer wall, which enclosed the village, implying organised collective labour. Hunting and agriculture were the main food resources, with wheat, einkorn, emmer and barley being grown as part of their diet. The inhabitants demonstrated exceptional technical skill, creating a huge stone staircase, which overcame the problem of accessing the upper and lower parts of the hillside.

As part of the site, there is also a reconstruction of some of the houses in the village. Martin Clark explained to us that it was one of the first heritage reconstructions in Europe and when it was first built, such endeavours were considered déclassé and amateurish, because of not having full knowledge of the original methods of construction. Usually only the footprint of the house is known, which gives a guide as to how the structure might have looked – depending on the level of preservation. However, such reconstructions are now commonplace as part of archaeological public engagement. Buildings such as these bring to life the domestic spaces of the people of
the past, and even if they are not totally accurate, give a glimpse into how life might have been; a tangible and important link to those communities.

I completed my MA at the Royal College of Art and then went on to be the Junior Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Art in London. Whilst I was there I became very interested in how people connect to their heritage using traditional art and skills. A few years later, I started work at the Scottish Crannog Centre, where I am involved in experimental archaeology (reconstructing a textile fragment found at the site of the Crannog excavation) and interpretation. Part of my work at the Crannog Centre involves coming to understand the methodology, limitations and resources available to the crannog dwellers who lived circa 2400 BC, on Loch Tay. A crannog is a dwelling on standing water made from either an artificially constructed island, or a natural island that has been added to in some way. Similarly to Choirokoitia, the construction of a crannog demonstrates huge technical and engineering achievement, as a community effort. There is also evidence of domestic life, farming, possible textile production, trade and musical culture.

Our museum has at its core a sense of community, bringing people together from diverse backgrounds to unpick, understand and connect to the community of the past, in an immersive environment. So it was fascinating, as part of the Erasmus+ trip to visit Choirokoitia to see the heritage reconstruction. This excursion spotlighted a number of ongoing personal questions about how we connect people to their cultural heritage in a meaningful, relevant and sustainable way such as:

1. Why do people need to connect to their heritage, in the shifting age of digital media driven by immediacy?
2. How do we develop communities in museums?
3. What is the role of interpretation and who is involved in doing so?
4. How do we increase social impact?
5. Taking all the above into account, can museums help us change the way we think about communities and interconnectivity and can communities change the ways we think about museums?

Looking to the communities of the past can directly inspire the answers to these questions. Maybe people could connect to their heritage to feel a sense of place, a sense of identity and ‘rootedness’, in a way that is relevant to their lives. Maybe wider communities can be created in museums by ensuring that people from disenfranchised backgrounds find a ‘home’ and share learning possibilities in the museum environment. Maybe it is extending beyond the academic/intellectual framework that informs traditional museum culture, to also engage with, in a sustainable way, skilled craftspeople, artists, storytellers and musicians to form creative spaces, who intersect with, and are informed by, the collections held in the museum. Maybe by having such an inclusive environment, we can directly mirror the coherent, collectively organised communities of the past. These ideas have all been inspired by Choreokoitia and have allowed me to re-imagine the landscape I live and work in, to further understand the role of cultural heritage to my community and has also inspired steps I can take to make a positive change at the Crannog Centre.
Silversmiths in the village of Lefkara
Craig Dickson

The village of Lefkara is situated at the foot of the Troodos Mountains in the south eastern region of Cyprus, 650m above sea level, 45 km from Nicosia. Today, the population of the village, which in the post-second-world-war exceeded 2500 inhabitants, is not more than 1000 inhabitants. The name of the village derives from the colour of the surrounding calcareous rocks: “White rocks = Lefkara” and is where Cypriot folk needlecraft art was born - the famous “lefkaritiko”.

Besides embroidering, another important crafting skill present in the village is that of the silversmith. The silversmith’s craft in Lefkara began in the early 18th century, flourished in the mid-20th century, with over 40 silversmiths and has steadily dropped since the 1940’s with only 3 left to produce the widely known crafted silver. The drop in number is due to a large movement of young people to major cities in Cyprus and overseas. There is also a lack of interest in the craft industry with the younger generation and the skills are not being passed on. Another factor is the large influx of lower quality products from countries like India and China.

The ‘Lost Wax’ method is used by many of the silversmiths to create their work. The process starts by carving a design into a resin using a sharp blade or pointed tool, usually under a magnifying glass. This resin is then surrounded by a rubber to create a flexible mould. The mould can then be injected with a liquid wax (see photo left) and once cooled is added to a stand along with other items to create a tree (see photo right). The tree is then invested, a process in which silica in liquid is poured over the tree, all of which is inside a flask. This flask is then vacuumed in a pressurised unit to remove all air bubbles and then heated in a kiln to melt the wax in the burnout process, leaving a hollow mould. Silver is then heated to over 1000 degrees and poured into the flask. (see photo bottom left). The flask is then cooled in water and the silica is washed off, leaving the silver tree behind. Acid is used to clean the silver and then each piece is cut from the tree and finely polished. The waste mica can be used in rendering buildings or whitewashing walls.

Looking at silversmiting in mountain villages through in the context of the ‘Four Pillars of Sustainability’ (four distinct areas: human, social, economic and environmental sustainability in relation to the preservation of a particular resource) this highly skilled craft is at risk of dying out completely. The economic and social pillars are very weak due to the lack of interest of the craft in the younger generation, which is leading to the loss of traditional skills.

There is a clear need for a new strategy to entice young people to the mountains to study and learn the art of silversmithing. This could be within Cyprus or even an international programme of teaching and spreading the skills as well as finding overseas markets. There is also scope for the few remaining silversmiths to be supported in learning new skills in advertising and selling products on-line. It is unlikely that the products flooding the markets from overseas could be limited, however a drive to support local craft produces could raise awareness and potentially highlight the need to label or acknowledge the difference between cheap factory imports and hand made goods.
I have been inspired to look at the crafts and skills base in the Highlands to ascertain if there are any similarities to Cyprus. I am also keen to explore the potential of creating a hub of traditional crafts skill sharing and/or a product sales venue to support and promote small craft producing artists from across the Highlands. In the meantime, I am selling the silverware available in Lefkara from my current place of work.
The Importance of maintaining culture and the issues relating to its loss Lindsay Elise Jolly

During our time in Cyprus with the NET5 program we, as a group, encountered many examples of cultural interaction that had been sustained from historical cultural traditions. These traditions are important to Cypriots and we saw evidence of how they bring the communities together, they bond them and strengthen relationships between them in both work related and social scenarios. They also create an atmosphere of family and togetherness, the Cypriots celebrate their heritage and work very hard at hanging onto it as economic and social climates change and make this ever more difficult.

Whilst in Cyprus I would walk around the Lefkara regularly, on my walks around the village I have spoken with many of the Cypriot residents, they are always friendly and inviting and genuinely happy to talk to you. Due to England’s current social nature this seems surprising to me, many residents put this down to the sun and the warmer climate but the comment that nearly all of them make is “we are a family here, we all know each other”.

On a number of our outings we encountered traditional Cypriot dance, the dancing here is a happy experience that gathers the community together. We saw a professional performance at the Kato Drys harvest festival which achieved a gathering of large numbers at the local coffee shop but more than this, despite it being a professional performance they included several of the local spectators. In parts of the dance they even managed to stop passing traffic and get the drivers of the cars to get out and take part in the performance. This is a good example of how the culture here changes how people respond to one another, in the UK it would be very unusual for the driver of a car held up by a performance to leave their vehicle and join the performance, a much more common response would be to show annoyance at the delay.
In Cyprus this dance is known to everyone, it is something that they are brought up with as a part of their lives and it brings them together, I feel that it is a large part of what creates this family atmosphere. It gives them common ground despite their different ages, careers or living situations. We saw the dancing on other occasions that were less organised and it was just a part of the local peoples Sunday lunch at a restaurant the locals frequent. People just got up and danced and again this element of pulling people from the onlookers occurred everyone that was eating stopped to watch and cheer and the whole restaurant in some way became a part of this jovial act of dancing. In that moment the family environment of Cyprus was very evident.

I see this as vital as back in the UK, particularly in England we have lost most of our cultural heritage and become a very insular race that does not care to know about or care for one another. This means that we do not have the same trust or generosity of spirit that exists in Cyprus. I suspect from meeting my Scottish companions on the program that this may not be the case so much in Scotland and I feel that this cultural heritage is something that they must now fight to keep. In Cyprus I would go out walking early in the morning and people would literally stop their cars as they passed to say good morning and talk to me, often leading to discussions that revealed how much they loved their country and appreciated its beauty. When I was a child in England it used to be common place that people in villages would do this, it is not so anymore and many people are reluctant to even say hello. It has led to an untrusting, uncaring and unsafe community that cannot trust one another and therefore becomes fearful of anything that differentiates someone. We have lost our kindness and we no longer have anything to bring our communities together, pubs are really the only common point of community in England now and unfortunately with the reign of larger lout culture even these often do not provide the connected community that would improve our social interaction. Due to our loss of culture England has become a nation without identity and developed many problems because of this. These issues highlight one of the reasons why what Arch Network is doing is of such vital importance now more than ever before and with Brexit looming and a society trapped in fear generating propaganda these programs show how important and beneficial it can be to be connected socially and culturally. This is something that I very much hope to take back and disseminate with Pop My Minds community.
Continuing cultures built around intricacy:
Lefkaritika + Green Village
Hamshya Rajkumar

‘I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet’

- Gloria Anzaldúa

Traditional weaving and stitching are dying. Each generation treasure a new, and somewhat evolved set of values. The young often collide with craft based traditions finding it to be time consuming, difficult and boring. However, the real danger is the loss of cultural identity. I believe the young must curate the most inspiring and beautiful aspects from this tradition to give them a new place within the traditions of today. Collectively we may find sentiment in a symbol or pattern passed down from the previous generation.

When visiting Pano Lefkara, Lefkaritika (Lefkara lace) captivated me. Often used as table cloths and runners; the younger generation no longer see the appeal in such textiles. The ecru colours mimicked the stone walls of village. Intricacy ranged from playful loops dancing into disciplined lines of geometric patterns. The 8-pointed Star of Venus was commonly found in Lefkaritika, recognised as a representation of love. Its existence may reveal a genuine appreciation and understanding of the symbol as it was introduced from the Romans. Or perhaps it was desired for its aesthetic, obeying gridlines for mosaic and lace. Though around the world, the 8-pointed star holds alternating meanings in different cultures with varying visual depictions. In Lefkaritika, the star usually bears holes. I assume this has been influenced by the act of stitching. Even when I bought a star pendant from the local silver smith, it also had holes on an etched surface referencing its Lefkaritika origins.

Today the symbol lives on in a new context. We were formally introduced to this symbol as the Margarita (I may have misheard) by our host Martin Clark at the Green Village shop. He has had the symbol stitched as a ‘pocket’ logo on recycled shirts. This revival can become a significant form of cultural identity. Continued value is given to the symbol through its new context boasting relevance in today’s minimal fashion trends. It has the potential to inspire younger folk to pick up the craft and introduce new forms to Lefkaritika. Motifs that speak of tradition generally possess sentimental value. In a way, this is essential to the forging of new cultural identity. These shirts tell this story and mould our participation in culture.

Martin identifies this as cultural sustainability. He speaks of the need for younger individuals to learn from the older ladies. By using traditional thread and linen, lace is produced in small villages. The environmental impact is minimal. Simmering down to local scales in become increasingly common today in order to maintain craft cultures and the skills it births. In the past, I have found craft communities to be warmer than those that are confined to the gated reality of race, gender etc. The language of the crafting hand is universal. Hands nowadays are more glued to phones than a tool, which behaves as a productive extension of the hand generating skill.

From process to aesthetics, handmade objects narrate the relationship between people and place. Objects created from materials extracted from the land exemplify this. Building a localised sustainable business structure around this ethos takes care of economy, environment, social and culture devoid of the Capitalistic vampirism which thrives today. Experiencing this in action has brought me closer to understanding how to establish a model like this myself. This is an ambition of mine I wish to achieve in my later years, which is what initially drew me to the Net5 Cyprus course. Though it is very early days for me, I am grateful to have encountered the Green Village model which will help me navigate an ambition that feels surreal and
beyond me. I have learned methods of the considerate hijacking and re-articulation symbols. It has inspired and enthused me alongside hyping up my levels of hope.

Witnessing the journey of the Star of Venus innovating and sculpting culture brings me comforting sense of joy. She is a pioneer through the generations. As long as there is a maverick to give her a new home.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Method(s) of dissemination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason Oliver</td>
<td>Staff presentation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Crannog blog</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Article sent out on mailing list</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inclusion into SQA training (Apprenticeship Scheme)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamshya Rajkumar</td>
<td>Staff meeting with presentation and Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Blog post on WT Jostle</td>
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<td>Creation of a digital + physical book (can be given to Arch and Grampus)</td>
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<td>Megan Hynek</td>
<td>Staff meeting with presentation and Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>Blog Post on AS Facebook, Instagram, &amp; Wordpress</td>
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<td>Craig Dickson</td>
<td>Internal training</td>
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<td>Selling pendants at Anam Cara and sharing information through a poster</td>
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<td>Lindsay E Jolly</td>
<td>Talks and skill sharing sessions with the Pop My Mind community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracy Lambert</td>
<td>Staff meeting and workshops (presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion with high school students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blog on organisations websites and social media</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Article in local newspaper</td>
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