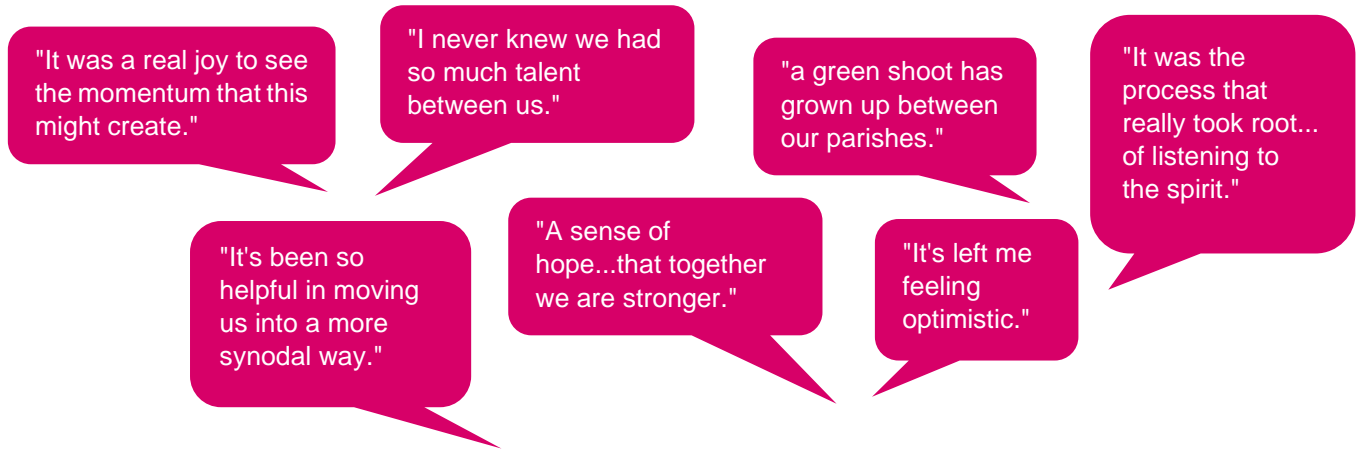


Here Now Us People: Programme Evaluation (SUMMARY)



OVERVIEW

T4CG commissioned Theos as an independent evaluation partner to examine the effectiveness of the three-part *Here Now Us People* programme. The ongoing impact of Covid 19 meant the report mainly focused on Part 2 – an intensive one-day workshop exploring common good thinking and practice – with 71% of participants having already engaged with scriptural reflection in Part 1. Drawing on 134 evaluation forms and 27 phone interviews, Theos looked at the extent to which the day workshop prepared 147 people across 12 cohorts for the transformative work that is envisaged in Part 3.

HEADLINE FEEDBACK

Respondents who completed feedback forms were asked to score responses to a series of affirmative statements about what they learned from the workshop, about common good, sense of vocational responsibility and motivation to continue: 82% agreed, or strongly agreed, with these statements.

Narrative responses described what went well, areas for improvement and what respondents planned to do differently in future. Responses were again strongly positive, welcoming the chance to meet and share with others and valuing the practical focus on building the common good with local people and institutions.

Phone interviewees also gave resoundingly positive responses, particularly noting the value of an in-depth focus on the common good, with all 27 interviewees intending to recommend the programme to others.

PARTICULAR POSITIVES

The programme's **flexibility** and adaptability to each cohort's needs was seen as a real strength.

Cohorts derived from multiple churches noted how the programme had **strengthened relationships** between them, and the same was true of cohorts drawn from different congregations in a single church.

There were clear **benefits** from the overall process and methodology, which impacted as much as the material and content itself, with the Rabbi Jonathan Sacks video receiving particularly positive feedback.

There was notable **enthusiasm** for the more practical and interactive elements, appreciation of the case study examples, and the workbook was seen as a valuable tool for ongoing reflection.

This report covered activity up to early March 2022, by which time most cohorts had not yet started Part 3. Whilst it was too early to measure tangible common good flourishing, there was an overwhelming **commitment** to continue the journey, deepen relationships, strengthen discipleship, empower lay leaders.

Post Covid Recovery: the programme was felt to be instrumental in bringing church communities back together after a traumatic year, not just to rebuild, but to contribute a new sense of energy for renewal. The content's adaptability using zoom was seen as a strength, with some groups planning to retain a hybrid mix.

Synergies with synodality: Catholic participants already engaging with 'synodality' noted that *Here Now Us People* strongly supports synodal goals. The programme clearly has potential as a complementary process to the Synod.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Particular suggestions for T4CG included adding more hands-on content, whilst further guidance for churches implementing the material included stricter time keeping, more consideration of participants' general comfort, adapting content to suit accessibility needs, raising awareness beyond the usual attendees to the wider church community, and better briefing for facilitators, to enable tailoring of workshop content to each cohort's specific context. It would be helpful for the evaluation framework to clarify further the roles of Local Host and Facilitator, elucidate questions and improve efficacy.

Getting Beyond the Usual Suspects

Engagement was found to be key to the programme's success. A common theme was that cohorts were populated by 'the usual faces', namely people already well-connected and active in the church.

However, Local Hosts who intentionally engaged more widely, who approached people personally, or who recruited from under-represented demographics, were more successful at gathering a mix of people including new faces. Those who relied on impersonal, standard marketing such as church newsletters, posters and social media, tended to attract a narrow group of those already involved in church life.

70% of participants were aged 55 and over and 84% were white; though this largely reflects the typical age and ethnicity profile of church-goers taking part in the programme. In places where the wider neighbourhood is more diverse, these figures reflect the fact that some groups are poorly integrated in the life of the church.

The importance of Local Hosts intentionally recruiting mixed cohorts, incorporating more personal recruitment approaches (which T4CG advises), was a key learning take-away. This was vital to engage younger people and to ensure a dynamic mix, not only in terms of ethnicity, but also of class and educational background.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improved articulation of the aims and structure of Part 3
- Clearer role definitions for Facilitators and Local Hosts, with emphasis on mixed cohort recruitment
- Evaluation methods to be more collaborative
- Better facilitator training, with encouragement to tailor sessions to context
- Content to include more practical and interactive elements
- Some content simplification and a workbook glossary of common good language
- A change of programme name to be more user-friendly: *Common Good Journey*
- Further evaluation following programme completion

This is a summary. The full evaluation report prepared by Hannah Rich of Theos is available on request.