



CAPTURING AND SHARING YOUR IMPACT



A BUILDING YOUNG BRIXTON PARTNERSHIP HOW-TO-GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

Building Young Brixton (BYB) is a partnership of 9 Lambeth-based youth organisations, working together to inspire and empower young people in Brixton to build the lives that they want. Our partnership is made up of the following organisations: Advocacy Academy, Baytree Centre, Ebony Horse Club, Grove Adventure Playground, High Trees., Indo-American Migrant and Refugee Organisation (IRMO), ML Community Enterprise and Spiral Skills. Our services include coaching & mentoring, personal development programmes, therapeutic recreation and educational & employment support.

We feel it's important to share our collective achievements, challenges, and what it means to be a partnership, in the hopes that it will encourage more collaborative working. Besides our official reporting, we've created materials that focus on our impact both individually and as a partnership. As BYB is supported by 2 different funders, we have standardised methods of capturing and sharing our impact that we hope will be beneficial in making the process easier.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As a partnership, it's key for you to establish early on what your values are, what you want to tackle and what you hope the impact of your joint working will be. Once you decide your outcomes you'll be able to tailor your outputs and the way you measure your impact.

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change is centred around our desire to see young people thrive in all areas of their lives, but particularly through these five outcomes:

1. An improvement in their mental and physical wellbeing
2. Improved relationships with their peers and family
3. To better engage with and feel a greater sense of community
4. Improved engagement with their schools
5. An increase in their employability skills

As individual organisations, partners may only work on 2-3 of these outcomes. As a partnership however, we are able to refer young people across to other services or even cross-deliver to ensure that they are receiving adequate support in all 5 areas. This also means that we don't have to stretch capacity by creating new services.

Tip!

Monitoring isn't a one shoe fits all. Feel free to try different validated tools to find what works best for you and your young people.

Impact Measurement

You want to ensure that you have standard measuring tools across the board that align with the outcomes you want to achieve. As you're a partnership with different services and expertise, your partners may not use all of your standardised tools. What's important is that whichever tool they do use is validated.

We worked with the Centre for Youth Impact to receive our Project Oracle Level 1 Standard. This has helped us to make sure we understand what works, what doesn't and ensure that we can evidence it. There may also be times where certain tools work better than others. For example, during lockdown youth worker observations were a more prevalent and useful tool than pre/post questionnaires. Being flexible with our approach during that time meant that we were able to consistently evaluate the progress being made.

'Our philosophy is that the work that needs to be done can't be done by one type of intervention or organisation. It's essential to have a network that has the full range of services.'

M&E Platforms

Having a standardised pre and post questionnaire has helped to create an element of uniformity in the information we collectively gather, but harvesting the data from all the different partners can also be time consuming. Finding a reporting platform that can be adopted by several partners is one way we have eased the process. We use VIEWS, which allows young people to complete their questionnaires online and also helps us to track any referrals. While it was initially tricky to get all partners up to speed on using the platform, it was helped along by having both the M&E and Partnerships Officers deliver tutorials.

If you opt not use a join platform, creating a spreadsheet where partners can input their figures and narratives for reporting is a simple way of gathering all the information. This can then be collated into a single report for funders.

Creating Reports

Outside of your essential reporting for funders, you may want to consider creating reports that allow transparency of your work in the community. You can align this with your funders reporting, or create mid-year reports to regularly provide an insight into what you do. We have shared our joint summer and Christmas party reports, and an 18-month report that looks at our collaborative successes and challenges from Jan 2019-June 2020.

This has been a great way of evaluating the partnership and the impact it's had not only on our young people but our members, from the directors to the frontline workers. We have also created a case study report, detailing stories from young people across the partnership. These can be written up through staff observations or by conducting 1:1 interviews with the young people you've worked with.

COMMUNICATIONS

A great way of growing our networks and improving the sense of community has been via our social media platforms. As well as our website, we have active Twitter and Instagram accounts where we regularly share the work we do, and are able to stay up to date with opportunities for both staff and young people.

Comms Toolkit

Setting out your objectives when building your comms toolkit will be helpful in ensuring that the content you create aligns with your overall goals. It could be that the main purpose of your comms will be fundraising, staff engagement or even just to inspire the sector. Deciding what the aim is will help you to streamline your content.

The next thing to consider is who's your target audience. Do you want to connect with similar organisations to build your network, or do you want to engage more interactively with your users? You may actually have a combination of target audiences across multiple platforms. Whichever you decide, just remember to tailor your content to suit them.

Your toolkit should contain copy that states your partnership's vision and mission. We have broken ours down into 20, 50 and 100 word segments that can be shared and ensure that the partnership can be presented in a uniform manner.

Although your awesome partnership work will speak for itself, it also helps to spend some time thinking about your branding, such as the colours you use, your tagline and your logo. This should be a collaborative effort and you may want to get your users involved too. Our logo was chosen by our Youth Steering Group as they felt it best represented the partnership.

Lastly, we suggest including a section on media consent, so that all partners are clear on where and how images will be used. This will particularly be useful in the run up to joint activities where partners may only have consent for their own young people. Moving forward, you can ask for partnership media consent to be explicitly included on your partner's registration forms.

Social Media Strategy

Content creation can be quite time consuming, even for a single organisation. Within a partnership, we make sure to promote our individual partners' content as well as share our partnership working such as joint training. We also create infographics highlighting our yearly outcomes, and have Practitioner Appreciation posts celebrating the different facilitators across the partnership.

Putting together a strategy of what you intend to post can help you to manage how often you post and plan for specific events or holidays. You can also schedule your posts in advance so that they are set for the week.

Monitoring your engagement can also help you to better tailor your content to your audience. Most platforms will provide free analytics so you can check your most popular posts, how many clicks a link has had and how many new followers you've had in the last 30 days.

"What was really helpful was the communication prior to the event. Having a flyer really helped to promote it amongst the young people."

Internal Communications

Its just as important that you share updates with internal stakeholders as you do externally. Staff may not always be able to stay up to date with what other partners are up to so creating an email group is one way of ensuring all partners are regularly receiving information. Another is creating an internal newsletter that not only shares any updates, but any upcoming opportunities such as free staff training, a new programme or work experience for young people in the area.

We have also found that creating and sharing promotional material ahead of joint events can help young people who may not be aware of partnership organisations to feel more comfortable with attending.

Tip!

Young people's quotes are a great way to create engaging content whilst sharing the impact you are having on them in their own words.