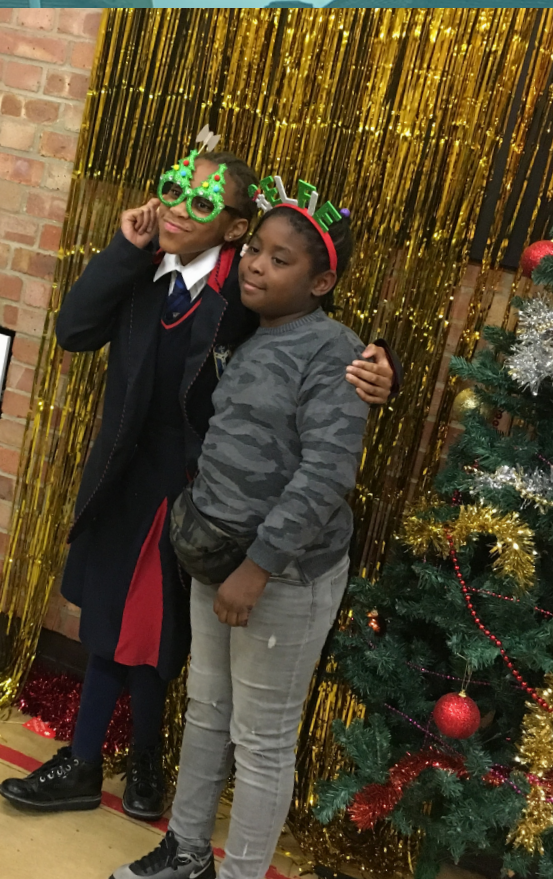


PLANNING YOUTH-LED JOINT EVENTS



**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 services include coaching & mentoring, personal development programmes, therapeutic recreation and educational & employment support.

At BYB, we like to bring young people together from across the partnership to develop new skills, create new experiences and have fun! We do this through cross-referrals, cross-delivery and joint activities and events. Although these collaborations are both beneficial and enjoyable, planning events in a partnership or for multiple organisations can be tricky. With this How-To-Guide, we hope to make the process easier by sharing what we have learned along the way.



CONSULTING YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE

The first step in planning a youth-led joint event is getting your young people involved. Our joint events were planned by the BYB Youth Steering Group (YSG), young people from across the partnership who share ideas to improve our joint service delivery. Together, they have planned two successful joint events: The Summer Day Out and the Chilled Out Christmas Party. You may have your own joint or individual youth steering groups, or you may want to open the opportunity out to any young people that want to be involved. When holding these planning meetings, it's helpful to ensure that the space is welcoming and somewhere they feel comfortable. Try to include some ice breakers, especially if the young people aren't familiar with one another, a check in space and encourage all young people to express their opinions equally.

TIP!

While this is an awesome space for generating great ideas, it's important that you make sure the young people are aware of what can realistically be achieved.

At our initial planning meeting, the YSG will decide a theme and brainstorm ideas such as what food they'd like and which activities should take place. They will also begin to designate tasks such as creating promotional material for the event. Once the staff team has agreed on a date, venue and budget, the young people will finalise their activities and begin to take on roles, giving them a sense of ownership. For example, there may be young people that are passionate about sports and would love the chance to lead a dodgeball tournament, or those that are creative and will happily capture content for your social media pages. Getting the young people involved means that you not only have better insight into what will be successful, but that they are more likely to spread the word amongst their peers.



TIP!

Make sure to take their capacity into consideration. They will be juggling school/college, so work around their availability.

While the input from the YSG in the planning stages is essential, it's also important you hear from as many young people as possible that are in attendance. Capturing their feedback is key in making improvements for future events so just as you would with your regular service delivery, you want to take note of the successes and challenges. This doesn't need to be a form; it can be done in a visual way, such as a feedback wall that young people can write on.



Tip!

Incentivising feedback can be a fun way of gifting young people for their honest opinions.

Creating a relaxed atmosphere is a great way to get ideas flowing. There will still need to be someone responsible for capturing notes and the meetings will need to be framed with some structure, but allow for flexibility, provide some nibbles and enjoy the time creating together. In the final meeting before our Christmas Party, we ordered in pizza as a mini reward for the consistent effort. Buying pizza for every meeting however would quickly add up, so treat the team at your discretion. We also made sure to thank them with a gift at the closing of the party. As the young people are offering their expertise as well as their time, we'd suggest always formally acknowledging this.

PARTNERSHIP COORDINATION

If you're working within a partnership then you're probably already aware that to get the most out of it, you need to be mindful of each other's capacity. Whilst everyone may not be able to commit an equal amount of time to planning, there are few things that you will need to decide on together. However, before these decisions can be made an initial meeting will need to take place to ensure there is buy in from all partners involved.

Venue & Date

By using one of your partner's spaces, you can save on the cost of hiring a venue and ensure that staff are already familiar with the site. If opting to do this, it is more than likely that the host partner will need to accommodate a large number of their own regular young people. You will also need to consider if the venue is suitable for all young people you want to attend; is the area unsafe for young people living in certain postcodes?

The sooner a date can be agreed upon, the easier it will be for partners to get started on their delegated tasks and begin promoting the event to their young people.

Health and Safety

Your H&S checklist will include essentials such as risk assessments, first aiders, gathering points in case of a fire and the designated Safeguarding officers on site. This information must be made available to staff attending on the day. After your initial safety announcement for young people and staff at the beginning of your event, consider ways that they can access the info again, such as clear signage or a help and information desk.

Tip!

Approach the event as you would any offsite trip: a permission slip to confirm attendance and a safe ratio of young people to staff.

Budget

While the young people would have come up with a range of awesome ideas, taking them all on is likely to be quite costly. Once you decide on the activities or catering, make sure to shop around. This can be a task that your young people can also help with. It may be useful to think of your budget for the event in terms of cost per head to make sure you stay on track. Remember that you can save on spending by using or borrowing resources from your partners, or even making them yourselves.

Tip!

Allocating the young people a budget can help them develop skills such as problem solving and money management.

Number of Attendees

When planning an event for a single organisation, it's easier to have a rough idea of the maximum number of young people to cater for. A joint event however can easily turn into a much larger gathering than expected if there isn't an agreed upon number of attendees. Different partners may work with different numbers of young people so it may seem unfair to not include them all, but you need to consider your budget, staff team and size of your venue. It may help to suggest a cap of 10-15 young people per partner for example.

On the other hand, you may overestimate how many young people you're expecting on the day. Displaying and regularly updating a sign up sheet at each partner's site can help you better gauge the numbers.

Networking

You will already be great at working with others given your experience in a partnership. Networking for your event will involve reaching out to businesses in your community to help contribute towards the day's success, whether that be a discount for catering, or donating items that can be won as prizes. Realistically, it may not generate a tonne of responses, but you are likely to receive some. Remember to begin reaching out as soon as possible and start with relationships you already have.

Reflections

As this could possibly be the first of a series of events, it's important to find out how the partners found the planning and delivery of the event so you know what to improve upon, and can avoid repeating unnecessary steps. Creating a short google form to gather their feedback is a quick and easy way of getting all their input in one place. Alternatively you could hold a meeting to review the event. At BYB, we collate both staff and youth feedback to create a short summary report that we can refer to ahead of our next events.

CASE STUDY:

CHILLED OUT CHRISTMAS PARTY

DATE: 5/12/19

VENUE: ML COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

17 Young People 24 Youth Workers

"MY FAVOURITE THINGS WERE THE FOOD AND FACE PAINTING."

The BYB YSG wanted a chilled out theme for the 2019 joint Christmas Party, and made sure to hold activities that would appeal to both older and younger users. They opted to have an Xbox Fifa Tournament specifically for the older group, while goody bag making and the arts and crafts tables were targeted at the younger children. They set about working on two versions of a promotional poster that was displayed across our partner's sites. The event was targeted at those aged 10-18, with the party running from 4-7.30pm. This allowed the younger users from High Trees and Grove to attend and leave earlier, and accommodated the older users at ML Community Enterprise (MLCE) who would usually arrive from 6pm.

Meanwhile, the partners had to decide on a venue, bearing in mind the fact that some of the young people we work with are unable to travel to certain areas in Brixton or Tulse Hill. We agreed to host it at MLCE to not only promote the new opportunities on offer to other young people from the partnership, but to create a positive memorable experience in the area, especially for those that regularly attend MLCE. We aimed for 20-25 young people from MLCE and 10-15 young people from other partners.

"It was amazing to see something that had begun on pen and paper had finally come to life."

YSG member, Baytree Centre

The event allowed young people from Brixton and Tulse Hill to come together and interact positively in a safe and welcoming environment. The event was also a great opportunity for youth workers to network across the partnership whilst working together. Planned activities included a photobooth, an Xbox Tournament, a drumming workshop, face painting and goody bag making.



"The Christmas party was chill! I practised the bongos and there was lots of food, socialising and awesome music."

YSG member, Spiral Skills

As part of the production of a BYB Video showcasing our work, GRAFT filmed clips throughout the night as well as interviewing some of our YSG members. This took place in the main room and at intervals, to allow them to still help out with activities. The YSG took on roles such as manning the pinata, distributing food and leading arts and crafts activities.

To capture feedback on the night, we held a feedback raffle with the chance to win Ritzy Cinema tickets, Nando's vouchers, Round Table book vouchers and more. To enter, young people had to decorate the BYB Christmas Tree with the answers to the following questions:

1. What do you like about your organisation?
2. What would you change about your organisation?
3. What did you enjoy about the party?
4. What would you like to see at our next party?

Overall, both staff and young people enjoyed this opportunity to come together and gave plenty of suggestions to take forward for our next event.

REFLECTIONS

Attendance

The event was mainly attended by those aged 12-15, with many of those aged 15 and over arriving later and remaining until the end. We found that the fact that it was getting dark early and it was held on a school night meant that some partners found it harder to sign up younger age groups. Future term-time events will be held on an a Friday or Saturday, and we will consider targeting older age groups for events in the winter.

Although the party was reasonably well attended, the size of the venue meant activities were quite spaced out. In the future it would be good to ensure that partners start recruiting earlier if we use a larger partner site. We would also consider over-recruiting to cover any non-attendees on the day.

Setting Up & Clearing

Due to capacity and the need to escort young people to and from their home sites, the number of staff able to set up and close the event was limited. Bar one member, the YSG were also unable to help set up the evening before or the day of the event. Moving forward, it would be helpful to ensure there are designated staff for these roles. We would also have even more rubbish and recycling bags dotted around the event, so young people and staff can tidy as they go for a more efficient clean up.

Activities & Food

We had taken onboard the feedback from our joint summer party that designating some activities just for the older groups would be better, as it was "uncool" to be with the younger groups. The Older's Only Xbox tournament went down very well and ran uninterrupted the entire evening.

Although we had planned a more structured build your own goody bag activity, the young people seemed to prefer a free-flowing event, dipping in and out of the activities that they wanted to take part in. As all age groups enjoyed the feedback raffle however, we will be creating more opportunities for them to win prizes. The most popular activities appeared to be the Xbox, outdoor football and dodgeball and the photobooth. The YP also enjoyed being their own DJ's for the evening, and played music from their chosen playlist ranging from UK Rap, to Pop, to Reggaeton.



A popular activity from the last Christmas Party was a drumming workshop which the YSG voted to bring back. We had originally opted to have an hour long session in the main room, but the noise disturbed the interviews being conducted by GRAFT. We had to move the workshop to the gym, but as this is where the speakers were set it delayed the young people being able to DJ. We were also unable to play any music in the main room, which would have helped create more of a party atmosphere in there. For our next event we will consider the placement of activities even more closely.

The young people chose to have Latin American food, which we purchased discounted from a local restaurant. This went down very well, with both staff and young people feeding back that it was a highlight of the event. Everyone had plenty to eat as additional food and snacks were provided by Grove APG and MLCE.

Staffing

For the next event, we will be ensuring that we either have activities managed by designated youth workers throughout the event to encourage participation, or have fewer activities that require a staff member leading in order to keep the party more free-flowing. Although a talent show had been planned and a few young people had signed up beforehand, there was a reluctance to be the first to perform meaning the show never took off. This is an example of where even more staff involvement would have been helpful. We will also be asking more staff to capture videos and photos of the event.

There was a staffed information desk at the entrance of the venue where all attendees could sign in, receive health and safety information and for staff to be given name badges. For our next event, we will also do PA announcements as well as opting for staff lanyards rather than badges, as these will be more easily visible.