



Refugee Week Conference 2020

Workshop Notes: Involving Young People

Coram Young Citizens

What are the barriers and solutions to recruiting and involving young refugees in co-production? Below are a mix of the views of Young Citizens members and Young Citizens programme manager as well as conference attendees:

Young Citizens member's thoughts:

Barriers and solutions:

- Intimidated by someone managing a project – good for other young people to 'sell' the project as on their level
- Fear because of English levels
- Culturally used to being with only other young women – may want to have female-only projects – however once she had been involved in some female only projects gained more confidence to be in mixed groups

What made them get and stay involved:

- Meeting people from their country – first time met someone from Syria – wanted to hear about their experience, ask how they got through struggles and asked for advice
- Using art / games – not lots of talking at first, more fun and not stressful
- English improved so gained more confidence over time
- Gained more confidence through the project – thought she would never stand on stage and speak in front of people but now does
- Liked learning about other countries and cultures
- Liked being in a group of people with shared experiences
- Young people in leadership roles – facilitating and encouraging other young people

"It's good because it comes from the young people. Load of places you don't get a chance. You just have to do what you're told to do, then you feel like why did you come."

Young people tips:

- Don't push too much – don't force people to share and let them warm into it gradually
- Games are really important to get the group feeling comfortable with each other
- Not having groups too big – 10 young people with 3 facilitators is good – 15-20 can be intimidating
- Before starting anything ask for ideas and what young people want in sessions

Programme Manager tips:

- Meet the young people first in their space – ideally with another young person from the project – ideally run a taster session
- Go to them – not always have them having to come to your space – go into colleges/ youth groups where they feel comfortable

- Can have a staff member or family member to accompany for the first session
- Use other organisations who already have a relationship to sell the project to the young people
- Word of mouth works well – young people telling friends
- A lot of time is needed to get people to the stage where they can effectively contribute – in terms of feeling comfortable and in terms of training and skills development
- Sense of community is important to keep people coming back
- Adapt each session to the group / individuals – young people aren't all the same! Bring out the best in the group and skills young people bring
- Be clear about why involving – where best placed to contribute. Give them the best shot at being able to contribute by training up and utilise existing skills in the room.
- Think about what young people get out of it - pay / give vouchers / certificates / training / sense of giving back
- Young people may not trust people in positions of authority – young people facilitators can bridge this. Also need time to build up trust.
- Be flexible – young people may have chaotic lives/lots of appointments so won't be able to attend every time. But also set clear expectations
- Make it fun – not like school!
- Think about what they get out of it e.g. travel and food costs
- Timings – outside college/ work hours etc.
- Getting feedback each time to improve for next time – take out bits that don't work well
- Testing ideas and seeing what works – getting feedback
- Asking more – what would you want, what would be good
- Applying ideas – so it feels like you actually listen
- Continuously getting feedback
- Be clear about why involving – where best placed to contribute. Give them the best shot at being able to contribute by training up and utilise existing skills in the room.

Conference Attendee thoughts:

Barriers:

- Less organisations outside London – can be a positive because they work together better – more joined up and less competition, but can be a negative as there is less support available.
- Cost of travel – needing funding to cover this
- Fear to travel to new areas / taking public transport
- Need time to do it well but can't always get the funding for this / or increase the time available once a project has started
- Stigma associated with the word 'refugee' – some young people won't want to be associated
- Young people not knowing about projects – if they're not in education or connected to any organisations this is harder. Don't have similar set up with organisations in own country so don't know to look.
- Competition between organisations

Solutions:

- Coming with something pre-planned – young people only make tweaks / small changes
- Language barriers – mentoring with someone from the UK
- Whatever is created for Refugee Week use in other ways outside the week as some young people may not be associated with the word and means projects have a life outside just one week.