

National Youth Work Week Workshops

31st October – 4th November 2011

Evaluation report

Introduction

For National Youth Work Week 2011, the Creative Communities Unit (CCU) delivered a series of workshops for youth workers and people working with young people. A total of three workshops were delivered in three locations across the West Midlands. This report will evaluate the workshops using evaluations gathered during the workshops, discussions between staff working on the project and other feedback. It will provide an overview of the programme outline, the costings, the benefits and areas for development and the outputs for the project.

Background to the project

National Youth Work week is an annual celebration of youth work coordinated by the National Youth Agency. It runs in the last week of October each year. While the National Youth Agency leads in the coordination and setting a theme for the week, individual organisations decide on the specific projects they deliver. The theme for National Youth Work Week 2011 was *Youth Work: Bringing Communities Together*.

During September and October 2011, CCU were undertaking a review of their work, seeking to identify new markets and new ways of working with organisations and recruiting students to courses. The need to develop positive relationships with colleagues in youth, community and arts settings was identified as a key strategy in marketing our work, as was the need to develop a strong reputation as leaders in the field. The development of a series of workshops to support youth workers during National Youth Work Week was one means of supporting this.



Project Outline

Nic Gratton and Peter Twilley, with Sharon Phillips, an MA Youth and Community Work Intern, designed a 2.5 hour workshop fitting in with the theme of *Youth Work: Bringing Communities Together*. The aims of the workshops were to share and celebrate the positive impact of youth work in developing positive relationships and a sense of belonging in communities. The workshops aimed to do this by providing an opportunity for youth workers to share good practice, to discuss the current policy direction and to capture positive youth work stories to develop into a DVD resource that could then be shared with the workshops participants, hosts, partners and communities. More broadly it was intended that the workshops would promote the work of the CCU, develop relationships with organisations and individuals working with young people and to start to identify the training and learning needs of youth workers.

The CCU approached three Staffordshire University Broadcast Journalism students, Richard Edwards, Sam Morter and Chris Edwards, to record the workshops and to capture positive youth work stories during the sessions. The students, in their final year, were keen to develop their portfolios and so agreed to filming the workshops and producing a DVD of the week's events. The resulting resource was shared with the participants of the workshops to support their work with young people and to promote their work to communities, partners and funders.

The CCU were in contact with two statutory services for young people in the West Midlands region, Wolverhampton Youth Service and Staffordshire Integrated Youth Support Services. Both organisations welcomed the proposals for a Youth Work Week Workshop and agreed to provide a venue and to market the workshop to their staff teams. Being based locally we were in contact with a broader range of statutory, voluntary and community youth organisations in the Stoke on Trent area and were able to recruit participants directly onto a third workshop hosted by the CCU at Staffordshire University. A fourth workshop was originally planned for a Birmingham venue which was advertised through the West Midlands Regional Youth Work Unit. However, this failed to recruit and was cancelled a few days prior to the event taking place.

Three workshops were delivered reaching 41 workshop participants from a total of 8 different organisations.

The programme outline can be found in appendix 1



Benefits resulting from the project

Benefits to the University

The workshops proved to be a good means of publicity for Staffordshire University and the CCU locally, regionally and nationally. A total of 41 people who work with young people attended the workshops from across the West Midlands Region. The high numbers attending may have been influenced by the lack of fee attached to the workshop. The majority of participants were new contacts for the CCU. One of the aims of the workshops was to increase our profile amongst youth and community work practitioners and to establish our reputation as a leader in the field. Feedback from one participant stated that the session was 'well directed' and demonstrated 'knowledgeable leadership'. Following the workshops a number of the participants have contacted one of the tutors to discuss ideas, share practice and to seek support, one has enrolled on the MA Youth and Community Work and another has shown interest in the MA Community Arts.

Delivering workshops for National Youth Work Week has also promoted the CCU to the National Youth Agency, who used our workshops as a case study of good practice for their National Youth Worker Awards publicity. A copy of this can be found in appendix 2. Peter Twilley and Nic Gratton were also invited to attend the Awards in London during National Youth Work Week, enabling us to nurture further relationships with National organisations and local youth workers from across the country.

Using the Broadcast Journalism students has helped to create links between CCU and the Broadcast Journalism programme which can be built upon for future projects.

Benefits to the CCU

In addition to the above, the workshops have helped to increase the profile of Youth and Community Work in the CCU and of the CCU within the faculty and the wider University. It is intended that the DVD has been added to our website which will help to increase our profile nationally.



Benefits to the organisations

The current context of youth work is rapidly changing and several organisations have discussed with us the difficulties they have experienced in adapting to these needs. The National Youth Work Week workshops were a means of supporting youth workers and organisations to do this. Two workshops brought together staff from single organisations (Wolverhampton Youth Service and Staffordshire Integrated Youth Support Service), and a number of participants commented on the value of doing this in their feedback to CCU. The workshop delivered in Stoke on Trent was made up of a number youth workers from a range of organisations and with a broad range of experience. Again, the value of this was recognised by participants. Sharing practice enabled youth workers to experience alternative perspectives from peers in different types of youth work settings, which provided the workshop in Stoke with vibrancy and positivity.

The focus of the workshop was the value of youth work in supporting communities. In this sense the workshops have helped to locate youth work within the context of the wider community which is in line with current youth work policy and strategy, in particular *Positive for Youth* and the *Localism Bill (2011)* and several local authorities who are moving towards a more community based approach to youth work.

Benefits to the individual participants

Feedback from participants identified that they had valued having the opportunity to share good practice with new and existing colleagues. Several commented on how positive the sessions were and that at a time when many youth workers are facing uncertainty, the sessions had motivated them in their work.

The workshops were practical and included the development of practical skills, including the use of technology with which to engage young people and wider communities. Again, some participants identified that they had learned new skills as a result of being on the workshops. The new skills, ideas and contacts gained by participants on the workshops will ultimately be of benefit to the organisations in which they work and the young people they work with.



Learning and Future Opportunities for Development

It became apparent that the CCU was more able to recruit to the workshops where we had build relationships with organisations prior to the workshop taking place. Delivering the workshop to one organisation was aided by the fact the lead contacts in the organisations were able to use their own relationships to encourage and support people to attend. In Stoke on Trent, Nic made direct telephone contact with a range of existing and new contacts which, again, helped to place the workshops on organisations and individual's agenda, ultimately resulting in the workshop being well attended.

The Birmingham workshop failed to recruit. The recruitment for this even was done by an email distributed through the West Midlands Regional Youth Work Unit. As mentioned above, the failure to recruit may have been as a result of the fact that no direct contact was made with potential participants prior to the flyer and email being distributed. At a time when youth workers are increasingly pushed for time, cold emails are easily dismissed. As a result of this, CCU have identified that the relationship with the Regional Youth Work Unit could be strengthened and have since started a project in partnership with them to identify the leadership and management needs of youth workers across the West Midlands.

The room used for the Staffordshire Workshop was unsuitable for an effective training session with the number of participants that attended. The room had been changed the previous evening. It did not have an internet connection that we were able to access resulting the second half of the session, which focused on social media, being difficult to deliver. In addition, the size and shape of the room meant that not everyone was able to contribute to that half of the session. In effect there were three groups (one being filmed, one engaging in the social media activities and one unable to contribute to this activity), and only two facilitators. As a result some felt that this part of the morning was somewhat wasted. It would therefore be helpful to make clear the minimum room requirements when organising future events and visit all venues prior to the workshops taking place.

Throughout the workshop week, the Broadcast Journalism students worked professionally and discretely to film the views and activities of the participants. Working with them resulted in a high quality resource being produced following the events. This not only provided the participants and supporting organisations with a resource to use with young people and other youth workers, it also provided the Creative Communities Unit with an additional means of publicity. While the relationship developed with the Broadcast Journalism Students was a positive one, there are a number of areas to consider before entering into similar collaborations



for future projects. Firstly, the project needs to be negotiated with the Broadcast Journalism Award tutors, not directly with the students. This will enable a more coordinated approach to the project and to ensure that the work fits with their work programme and assessment requirements. Secondly, the completion of the DVD took several months, primarily as a result of the students' other commitments within the University. Again, negotiating the project as part of the students' work programmes (if possible) could have ensured that tighter deadlines could be set for this work.

A further useful area of learning from the workshops has been that CCU have been able to identify a range of training needs of youth workers in the Wolverhampton, Staffordshire and Stoke areas, helping us in turn to plan a series of master classes designed to meet these needs. In particular, identifying the impact of youth work and further work around young people and community were identified as areas for CCU to explore. The need for support and supervision of youth workers, particularly those in the voluntary and community sector was also identified.

Conclusion

Overall, the experience of delivering the *Youth Work: Bringing Communities Together* workshops for National Youth Work Week 2011 was positive. It enabled CCU to make contact with a range of organisations and individuals, many of which were new contacts. It also helped CCU to increase their profile in the West Midlands and including the DVD on the CCU website and the links that have been made with the National Youth Agency will support this at a national level. While a number of areas for learning and development have been identified, the project brought a range of benefits for the organisations and individuals involved and provided CCU with a means of assessing needs of youth workers and youth work organisations in the area.



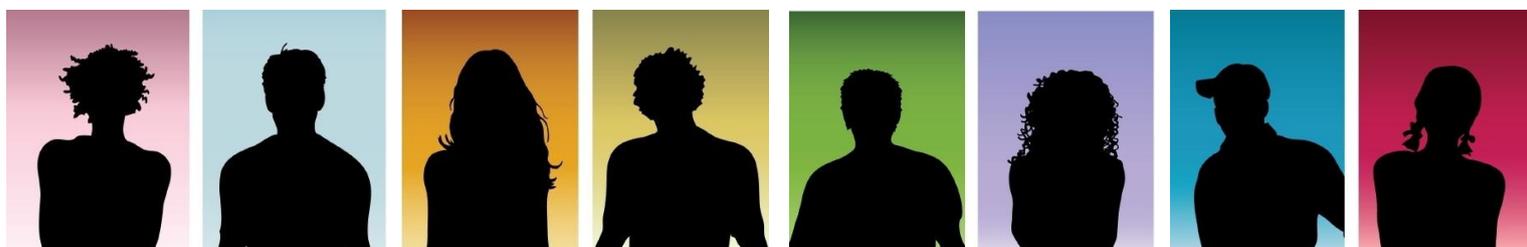
Appendix 1

National Youth Work Week workshop programme

Time	What	Method	Resources	Lead
10.00	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>Signing in</p> <p>Introduction to the session</p> <p>Permissions form</p> <p>Icebreaker – My name is X and community to me means...</p>	<p>Facilitator input</p> <p>Group activity</p>	<p>Aims and objectives on flipchart</p> <p>Signing in sheet</p> <p>Permissions form</p>	NG
10.15	<p>What communities are young people you work with a part of?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the responses Categorise into groups – geographical, identity, interest, social media <p>Do they feel connected to these communities?</p> <p>Link to later – how we can help young people and communities to connect</p>	Group wordstorm		PT/SP



10.30	Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five year timeline of policy? Ask people to identify key policy developments. • Discuss Coalition policy – lack of real direction, focus on contribution to society, getting into work 	Timeline Discussion and talk through handout Printed policy docs	Handout – Policy Areas of investment Positive for youth word cloud	NG
11.00	The impact of youth work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bearing the above in mind, but also holding onto the positive affects youth work can have – what impact can youth work have on bring young people and the wider community together • Ask for examples of practice or what could be done • Practical methods - • Record examples on the big board/wall 	Group activity Discussion Feedback Give out handout	Large board / impact wall Pens Cloud / speech bubble post it notes Handout - methods	PT
11.15	Break			
11.30	Capturing the stories Introduce methods of sharing stories <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Video / podcasting 2. Twitter 3. Blog 	Take 15 per group to have a go at each (may need to vary depending on wifi access)	Computer access + wifi	Film makers NG PT/SP



12.20	<p>Action Planning</p> <p>Ask people to identify one thing they want to do as a result of today.</p> <p>Identify the steps that need to be taken, who can help and the resources needed. Don't forget to include when you want it to be done by.</p>	<p>Complete Action plan handouts</p> <p>Put in envelop</p> <p>Hand in to be posted out to arrive next week</p>	<p>Action plan handouts</p> <p>Envelopes</p>	NG
12.30	Evaluation and close			PT/SP



The National Youth Agency's publicity for National Youth Work Week

Case Study

Staffordshire University National Youth Work Week

Creative Communities Unit Workshops highlight the impact of youth work

Through conversations with local youth workers and students on the MA Community and Youth Work courses delivered by the Creative Communities Unit at Staffordshire University, lecturers Nic Gratton and Pete Twilley started to wonder how they could support youth workers to highlight and promote the amazing work they do. Many youth workers are feeling de-motivated by the effects of spending cuts and threats to services. They are concerned about how these will affect the profession and ultimately, young people. With the impact of the recession affecting young people on a number of levels and the riots in London and in some areas of the West Midlands over the summer, youth work appears to be more important than ever and yet the impact of youth work is still difficult to measure. More than ever, it would seem, the positive impact of youth work needs to be celebrated.

The Creative Communities Unit Workshops explore the current policy context of youth work and the communities that young people are a part of, providing time to explore and share ideas of how to bring communities together through youth work. The impact of youth work in helping to bring communities together will then be celebrated through sharing experiences and capturing youth worker's stories. Nic and Pete are working with three Broadcast Journalism students from Staffordshire University who are being invited to film the session and to capture the stories as they unfold. The aim is to produce a short film highlighting the difference that youth work can make in communities. Other methods of recording stories are also being used including live Twitter feeds, word storming and voice recordings. All participants on the workshops will have access to the short film to use a resource for youth work, training or to promote youth work to local communities, partners and other organisations.

