

What we learned

From 2021- 2023 Movement to Work embarked on its first ever Youth Steering Group and it learned a few lessons along the way! This Youth Steering Group was designed to hold a National Lottery Funded youth project to account in a specific region of the UK, with a large local authority who had not gained feedback in this way before. The project being evaluated by the Youth Steering Group was linked to The Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham 2022. Youth or Community Steering Groups are a fantastic initiative, and for this local authority, was truly innovative.

These groups can harness “real life” insights in “real time” for your company, social mobility programme or funding intentions, whilst also offering up extraordinary developmental opportunities for local residents.

We firmly recommend this form of ‘social listening’ (typically reserved for online media) but wanted to issue some guidance, based on our experience, to help others who are setting up a focus group of this kind.

Movement to Work is more than happy to share deeper insights, or discuss further, if you are looking to create a Youth Steering Group or Panel
- please get in touch with your Regional Development Lead, or email info@movementtowork.com



Continuity
PAYMENTS
Definitions
Explanations
AWARENESS
Support

Recommendations

- Continuity for long term youth projects is essential. Where possible, even in part, resources should be guaranteed for the same timescale.
- Payment of young people should be considered in return for a long standing commitment such as a Youth Steering Group or Panel, where essentially young people are acting as consultants. Payment could refer to wages, vouchers or subsidies and be issued on a monthly, quarterly or half yearly basis. This is suggested as an addition to any other incentives such as mentoring, personal development and merchandise.
- Define roles, responsibilities and contracts prior to work commencing. This aids working relations across all groups immensely and may sound like an obvious choice, but when a project develops at speed, and quite organically, it can be difficult to do.
- A one page ‘pitch’ should be drawn up to clearly explain the project, to anyone, at any point in time. If the project cannot be articulated in this way, it isn’t clear or is too complex.

- All organisations, who are collaborating on a project of this nature, should hold awareness and be able to talk to it even at a high level. Additionally, a project of this nature needs to have universal support from all organisations involved and should not rise and fall on the backs of a small number of key people. This also would help with contingency planning.
- Create a 'flexible reserve' within the project budget and ring fence it to allow for agile and responsive ways of working. This is particularly important when working with young people in live play.
- Play to team strengths and resource initiatives like Youth Panels, or Community Steering Groups, as passion projects.
- Ensure local presence to facilitate frequent in person meetings. Despite being the first generation to grow up with tech at their fingertips, young people value in person working immensely and it aids outcomes.



Flexibility
Responsiveness
Local presence
Connections
Agreements
DIVERSITY

- Ensure any linkage to high profile events is concrete and robust. This will support every single activity thereafter, and the value of the project will talk for itself. This helps massively when looking to gather support from partners and external stakeholders alike.
- Hold partners to account through official agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding, or detail expectations within initial contracts. This could extend to securing participants, venue support, events promotion, expected attendance and young person rewards.
- Diverse perspective requires diverse candidacy - across all markers. Any Youth or Community focused Steering Group should reflect the representation within the local community as closely as possible.

Recommendations

YOUTH STEERING GROUP



Effectiveness
Incentives
Communications
Accountability
DEVELOPMENT

- Only consider a project website if it becomes a funnel for leads or a platform to gain insights from. You may be able to partner on an existing platform, or rent space on another, if you do not have the time or resources to create from scratch. We advise against using a webpage purely as a 'shop window' or to communicate the work of the project. There are more effective routes to do that such as Lunch and Learn or guest speaking.
- Secure exclusive incentives from partners before advertising the opportunity to join a Youth Steering Group, this will make your job a lot easier and avoids potential young participant disappointment at a later stage.
- Utilise a range of communication channels within the project but clearly articulate the expectations of each. Combining calls, meetings, WhatsApp, Zoom and emails can muddy the water, although each does have a role to play.
- Hold young people to account and continually provide opportunity for them to develop professionally; this may mean providing constructive feedback and having difficult conversations.

Thank you for reading!

If you would like to find out more about Movement to Work, the Youth Steering Group or any of our initiatives, please get in touch.

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