



Making It Happen

Vision

Making it Happen is a project-based programme for a small group of young people who want to create change in their community. The vision and mantra of the programme is that we believe in the power of the individual and how that can be used within a larger group to create meaningful change.

Making it Happen works with young people to support them to create a better society for themselves and others.

Purpose:

The purpose of the programme is to engage with young people and work with them to develop key skills in leadership, and decision making to enable them to make meaningful change in their own lives and the life of their community.

Guiding Principles:

- Every group of people has the ability to solve its own problems.
- People need to feel excited, happy, sad, lonely, and angry in order for them to take action. When people feel emotionally attached to a topic or issue they normally take more ownership and stay committed to seeing a resolution or change.
- Young people lead the programme - adults are there to train, support and facilitate young people.
- There are no pre-determined outcomes – each group has the freedom to identify the real needs of their community and decide to take action.
- As there are no pre-determined outcomes the programme requires commitment from the participants. The content of the project is determined by them
- People are honest about the key issues.

Core training modules:

- i. Self Awareness
- ii. Personal Motivation and Growth
- iii. Change and Potential
- iv. Skills training
- v. Programme planning and decision-making

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In order to build sustainability and capacity within the group, an adult who is connected with the group is identified to provide ongoing support. The support worker should be available and present for all the training in order to understand the journey of learning the young people have experienced.

On completion of the training, the group of young people will go back to their own setting and begin to implement the plan that they will have developed during the training sessions.

The group should meet regularly to continue working on their project with the support of their worker.

At the end of the process it is recommended that the group are recognised for their work and a celebration event take place. Each person should receive a certificate for completing the process (the programme is not accredited)

Who is it for?

This programme is aimed at 11-16 yrs old.

- Ideal group size should be 4 – 8
- Young people who are committed to the purpose and vision of the programme. It is critical young people understand this programme and know what they are signing up to
- Young people sign up to all elements of the training e.g. prep day, training sessions and all follow up meetings required to complete their project.
- Young people who want to bring about some type of positive change

What is the time commitment for facilitator?

- Preparation/Planning Day
- 6 training sessions
- Within 6 weeks of the final training session the group should be offered a follow up session with the facilitator to look at their action plan, help tackle any issues and re-motivate the group to take forward their project.
- Offer ongoing support to groups via, phone, email, etc.



Role of Support Workers:

- The support worker is there to support his/her group in going through the full Making it Happen programme, to motivate them and help in whatever way the group need them to. This may be to facilitate access to computers, book rooms for additional meetings etc.
- The support worker is there not to advise or direct the group, but to help facilitate the group to develop and deliver a project that they deem as important.
- The support worker is there to deal with any behavioural issues related to their group.

Preparation Day

Aims of Session

- Introduction to Making it Happen Programme
- Teambuilding.
- Identifying Hopes and addressing fears of group
- Setting contract for group

Duration: This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources needed

Games and Icebreaker equipment

Flipchart

Post-it notes

Info on vision of the Making it Happen Programme

List of statements

Activity 1

Icebreaker and Teambuilding games

As with all group work it is important that the group feel comfortable with each other. As this programme requires group members to share some life experiences and to honestly discuss issues affecting their community it is important that sometime is spend teambuilding.

Activity 2

Introduction to Making it Happen

Using the information regarding the vision, purpose and guiding principles of Making it Happen at the start of this document explain to the group the rationale for the programme. This is to give the participants an understanding of the opportunity available to them and commitment required from them. It is also important that the participants realise at this stage that the whole process is reliant on their ideas and that there is not a set project idea to complete at the end of the training.

Activity 3

Hopes/Fears & Contract

The aim of the activity is to explore participant's expectations and hopes for the programme, it is also about addressing any fears and anxieties they may have.

Fears and expectations is an activity that can be used in preparation to any youth work programme.

The facilitator should introduce the session and stress the importance of participants taking time to think about any hopes and fears they may have for the programme. The facilitator should clearly indicate that open discussion around these issues can result in a more enjoyable and effective programme.

Supply pens for each person and also provide a large amount of post-it notes. Ask the group to use the post-it notes to record each individual hope or fear they have relating to the programme.

Once people have finished, ask all in the group to crumple up their post-it notes and throw them into the middle of the room. The group should ideally be in a circle, either on seats or on the floor. Once everyone has done this ask each individual to lift a few post-its each until there are none left on the floor.

In any order you wish, ask participants to read out the various hopes and fears on the post-it notes. The facilitator should record these hopes and fears and seek to resolve any fears through the development of an agreed contract.

Hopes and fears can also be used as part of the review process in any programme, by simply going back to them at the end of the programme.

Activity 4

Agree / Disagree Continuum

Set the exercise up by explaining that this is simply an opportunity to debate and discuss issues that may be of relevance to them. In preparation, it makes sense to have statements that will create some movement and energy.

Once you have this explained ask the group to all come together in the middle of the room. The room should be free from chairs and tables and you should identify one corner of the room that is AGREE and the opposite end is DISAGREE. Explain that you will read a statement out and the participants will be asked to place themselves along the continuum based on how strongly they feel about a certain topic.

Once people have placed themselves on the continuum, ask for their opinions, it may help to play a devils



advocate role in order to here both ends of each debate.

Ensure that there are agreed and understood guidelines around listening to each other and respecting each others views.

Pre-written statement examples are below:

- Young People have it easy now days, compared to life 20 years ago.
- Young people should interview people applying for jobs in the youth Centre.
- If there was an evening curfew of 10.00pm for all young people, there would be a dramatic fall in crime.
- The death penalty should be brought back for certain crimes.
- Young people know when it is right for them to have sex and experiment with drink or drugs.
- Young people should design the programme, activities that go on within the youth centre.
- Young people are generally not interested in volunteering and doing stuff in the community.
- The legal age of sexual consent should be raised to 18
- The PSNI are really effective in our area.

Session 1 – What makes me, me.

Aims of Session

- Help participants to reflect on their own values, beliefs, interests and life experiences.
- Motivate participants to realise they can create change

Duration

This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources needed

Games and Icebreaker equipment

Flipchart

Pens & markers

Selection of magazines to cut up

Scissors

Glue

Activity 1

Review contract from preparation day

As the activities in session 1 will ask the participants to share with the rest of the group something about themselves it is important to remind the group what was agreed on the preparation day regarding the group contract.

Activity 2

Energizer games

Gets the group energized and motivated to take part in the activities.

Activity 3

Self Portrait Collage

This activity is to allow the participants the opportunity to think about their interests, passions and ambitions for their life. From these elements young people can start to understand themselves and see how these elements will influence their interest and motivation to get involved in other projects and work as part of a team.



Give each young person a flipchart page and ask them to draw an outline of a person from the waist up. The image has 3 sections

- » **head** - represents our dreams and ambitions
- » **arms** – represents our current interests.
- » **torso (contains our heart)** – represents our passions, what gets us excited, what we love!

Leave a large selection of magazines and newspapers for the participants to look through and encourage them to cut out images, phrases, words or letters to make up words that represent the different elements of their life. Explain to the participants that it is not an art competition but an opportunity to use creative methods to explain things about themselves to others in the group. Facilitators should be on hand to support those who need any help with this task.

When everyone has completed their collage ask them to share it with the rest of the group.

Activity 4

Life Map

This activity allows the young person to consider some of the events in their life that may have influenced values, beliefs and opinions. Ask the young people to find a space on their own in the room with a page and a pen. Ask them to draw a timeline across their page and representing their life with one end being their birthday date including the year and at the other end being the present day. Explain to the group that you want them to answer the following questions on their timeline by putting a few details and the date. The date does not need to be precise but should be a month/season and a year. It is important to emphasise to the young people that they do not have to share any information from this activity should they not wish to. It is important however to highlight it is a chance to reflect on their life and what has happened during it that may have influenced their decision-making.

Suggested questions to ask:

- First pet
- First film you remember at the cinema
- Most embarrassing memory
- A sad experience
- A happy experience
- Earliest memory
- When you met your best friend
- First day at school
- First kiss

Session 2 – Working Together

The emphasis of this session is to introduce the idea of individuals coming together to work as a team. It is important to focus on how a team is made up of individuals working towards a common goal but each person brings with them their own interests, passions, dreams & ambitions and life experiences to that group.

Aims of Session

- Help the group to develop as a team
- Motivate participants to realise they can create change
- Give participants the opportunity of planning a presentation
- Understand what is required when planning a project

Duration: This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources needed

Team Games and Icebreaker equipment

Flipchart

Pens & markers

Activity 1

Team Games

Use this time to focus the group on becoming a team and working together. Draw out learning that will help the group when deciding on its project e.g. listening to everyone in the group, learning from mistakes etc.

Activity 2

Dragon's Den

Using the concept of the popular BBC show 'Dragon's Den' divide the group into groups of 4. Give the groups the same brief – With unlimited budget and resources they must create an idea that they feel would benefit their community. The idea can be as creative as the group wants e.g. think Barclay card ad where the guy travels home using a waterslide!!

Allow the group 45 mins to create a presentation of their idea that includes how it would improve their community. The panel can ask questions. It is not a competition for the best idea as the panel may feel that all ideas would deserve funding but draw out positive elements from each of the presentations.

This activity focuses the group on their community and helps them to start thinking about some of the issues affecting their community. It is also useful at this time to encourage the group to think about how they decided on their idea.



Session 3 – Our Community

Session 3 introduces the participants to concept of exploring and assessing their own community to identify needs and issues. The participants are encouraged to answer a number of questions that highlights the positives, negatives and actions required to improve their community.

Aims of Session

- To help the group to identify who is their community
- To identify the needs of the community
- Help to prioritise needs in the community and work towards identifying a project.

Duration: This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources Needed

Games and Icebreaker equipment

Flipchart paper

A1 sized community action planner resource (included in document)

Markers

Pens

Activity 1

Draw your community

Divide the group into groups of 3 or 4. Ask the groups to draw their community as a birds eye view map. Allow the group to define what they see as their community. Ask the group to then highlight areas and places of significance/importance to them. This may include the bus stop they get for school, where other YP hang out, the local chippy, a wall they have written their name on etc.

Allow 30 – 40 minutes for this and then ask the group to share with the larger group. Use the maps to generate conversation around everyday life in their community, discussing good aspects, issues etc

Activity 2

Community Planner

Give each group a large community planner resource. Ask the groups to draw their community again in the centre of the page and then to start answering the questions in each section. As the group will be using the community planner as a resource for their project, drawing their community again allows for them to refine and develop their drawing.

Again allow 30 -40 minutes for the groups to complete the planner. Share the community planners with the larger group and allow the conversation to develop in order to help identify some possible project ideas.

Session 4 – What Do We Want To Do?

Using the completed community action planner the group now need to prioritise needs in their community. It is important that the group work together to agree on the project they want to complete and that can be achieved.

The facilitator should provide support and ask critical questions to help the group to think through all that will be required to complete the project. It would be useful to refer to “The 7 steps of project planning” handout on the next page to help the group finalise the project by encouraging them to answer the questions for their ideas.

Aims of Session

- To prioritise project ideas and decide on final project idea
- Begin to assign roles and responsibilities for the project

Duration: This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources Needed

Flipchart paper

Completed community action planner

Markers

Pens

7 steps of project planning handout.



7 Steps to Project Planning Handout

For a project to be successful in its finished product, you first need to be successful in planning the project from the start. Below are seven tips to help you start planning your project successfully.

Step 1— Do your homework: evaluate the project up front and research every possibility. It is important to check with others who have tried to do something similar to learn from them. Find out as much as possible at the start.

Step 2—Prepare yourself for a possible ordeal: identify hotspots and obstacles. We cannot know everything about anything and cannot predict with certainty what tomorrow will bring. Planning is a matter of probabilities, which means sometimes what your plan works out and sometimes it won't. It is equally important to be aware of the potential pitfalls and create alternative plans of action.

Step 3—Breaking it all down: into hunks, chunks, and bites
Henry Ford said, "Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs."
Break your project down into hunks, chunks and pieces—what are all the pieces of the program, from making flyers to taking out the trash at the end of the event.
Chip away at your goal a little at a time.

Step 4—Give it an order: what comes first on the to-do list?
Determine which hunks, chunks and pieces are to be done in what order. Make sure you're buying staples before putting up the flyers or that you order tablecloths in more than enough time.

Step 5—Who's doing what?: determine who is responsible for what
Determine who in the group is responsible for what. A shared workload helps to maintain positive team dynamics. It is also important that if a task requires a specific skill that the most appropriate person is completing that task.

Step 6—And the task will be completed when...?
Decide when each task needs to be done—and stick to it! Use Forward and Backward Planning (start at the date of your event/activity etc and work backwards with your calendar to find a start date for each part) to make sure you give yourself enough time. Hold yourself and others accountable!

Step 7—Determine cost:
When planning it is important to know your budget and account for all money to be spent. It is important to stick to your budget as closely as possible during the project as funders may ask for details of how money was spent.

Session 5 – Reward and Relect

Up to this point your group have been working hard on the focused task of creating a team, identifying needs in their community and deciding on a project idea that they wish to complete. It is good to reward this work with an activity that continues to build up the confidence in the team but also is just good fun.

Aims of Session

- Reward for the group for their involvement and work
- Continue to build confidence in the group regarding their ability to create change.

Activity

This activity could be whatever your group prefer to do and it could be used as an opportunity for the group to organise the activity themselves. The group may want to organise an overnight residential with some outdoor activities or go out for a meal together, book self catering accommodation and play board games all night to give a few examples.

Reflection

It is useful during this session to reflect on the achievements to date considering the process has been work to this point. As facilitator it will be encouraging to reflect on the personal journey that the young people have been on:

- Looking at who they are
- What they bring to the group
- How they have developed and grown as a team
- The ideas that have been suggested and worked through to the point of having a project idea that has been agreed.



Session 6 – Next Steps

Session 6 is a follow on from session 4 in creating a working action plan to get the project started. For the facilitator this will be the last working session they will have with the group and should be used as a support session, allowing the group to pose questions and queries about progressing the project. The session should begin with a presentation from the group about their project idea with the rest of the time spent offering support and guidance about achieving the project aims.

Aims of Session

- Group to present their project idea
- To create an action plan & timeline for the project
- Assign roles and responsibilities for the project

Duration

This session should last 2.5hrs

Resources needed

Flipchart paper

Completed community action planner

Markers

Pens

7 steps of project planning handout.

Conclusion

As the group are moving from completing training to mobilising themselves to develop and implement a project idea in their community, session 6 requires the facilitator to help the groups identify pitfalls and possible barriers which may cause frustration and the project to stall. It is important the facilitator has suitable resources to help signpost the group towards additional support in completing their project. This may be in the form of small grants or organisations with a remit to support e.g. the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and Youthbank.

The facilitator should also agree dates for follow up meetings to support the group to stay on track or to help evaluate and amend action plans should the project require that.

Useful Resources & Funding

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

www.niyf.org

Youthbank

www.youthbank.org

Awards for All

www.awardsforall.org.uk/northernireland/index.html

Youth Council for Northern Ireland

www.ycni.org

Unltd

www.unltd.org.uk/index.php