



Organisational Change Programme

‘Creating a Culture of Participation’

Promoting, encouraging and developing good practice around participation has not only been the key objective in all the work of the Big Deal but was identified as one of the three core principles of effective youthwork in ‘A Model for Effective Practice’ as developed by the Youth Service Curriculum Development Unit.

The Organisational Change Programme has been created, through the Big Deal, to help organisations create a culture of genuine participation in all aspects of their existence. It has been designed and delivered for a range of organisations, a large regional organisation, right down to a small community based youth setting, and in this document we aim to outline the process that takes a facilitator through the different stages of delivering and supporting an organisation through Organisational Change.

The programme has 4 stages - Look, Think, Act, Review (see outline timetable on pg 4) The process reflects and reviews current participative practices by means of an initial audit with both staff and young people. This is followed by training for the staff and the management committee members. The facilitator and the Leader-in-Charge should then decide if it is appropriate to continue the programme. This decision should take into consideration the attitude and openness of staff and management towards participation. Should it be considered that there is resistance it may not be appropriate to begin training with the young people’s champion group (a group of YP who wish to champion the voice of members with decision makers). Should staff and management understand and support the idea of participation then begin the champions group training.

Upon completion of the training, a full consultation with all stakeholders (staff, management and members) in the organisation should be conducted. With support from the facilitator and based on information gathered from the consultation an organisational participation strategy should be created that works towards ensuring young people have a meaningful decision making role in your organisation.

The ethos throughout is to support organisations to get better at listening to the views and opinions of young people. The programme was not designed to solely support the development of a participative structure within an organisation, or indeed involve young people in the governance, rather it was designed to help organisations to listen and engage young people in decision-making. Therefore each participation strategy is specific to each organisation and should reflect the needs of the young people and the organisation. The participation strategy should then form the basis of review and evaluation of the programme.

The process explained



Prepare

Before any work with the young people and staff team takes place it is important that some preparation work is completed. This is to outline the full process of the programme and to ask the management committee to consider the commitment required and to sign their willingness to engage with the programme. The facilitator should draw up a tailored memorandum of understanding for each organisation they agree to work with and we have included a sample Big Deal Memorandum of Understanding that was designed and used when this programme was being delivered through the Big Deal. (appendix 1)

Stage 1 - Look

Stage 1 – Look provides an overview of the current participation level and opportunities afforded to members of the organisation. An audit of both young people and staff is completed separately. The audit completed by the facilitator should be anonymous and provide the opportunity for total honesty. This external review of the organisation informs the report which outlines “How do Children & Young People currently participate within the organisation?”. This report is presented back to the staff at the beginning of the training.

Stage 2 - Think

Stage 2 – Think provides the opportunity for all involved to gain a better understanding of Participation and why it is important in the life of a youth organisation. Training for staff and young people is delivered separately. It is important that all staff members and members of the management committee are invited to attend this training. It's the role of the leader-in-charge to encourage full participation from the staff. Delivery



of staff training is the sole responsibility of the facilitator. As it may be assessed that adults in the organisation do not fully understand or support youth participation in the organisation the process may not progress beyond this stage. This decision should be taken in partnership with the leader-in-charge.

The champions group is a group of young people from the organisation who are keen to 'champion' the voice and opinions of members from the organisation. Like the staff and management, the champions group take part in training. It is the responsibility of the leader-in-charge to identify the group of young people and be available to support the group throughout the training and consultations.

Stage 3 - Act

Stage 3 – Act has two key elements:

- the champions group using their learning to carry out a consultation and then present their findings to the staff,
- staff and the champions group working together to negotiate an action plan and participation strategy.

Stage 3 – Act brings the young people and adults back together to create an action plan and participation strategy for the organisation. The action plan and strategy should be a negotiated process and should reflect the findings from the initial audit and the consultation. The facilitator should work with and support the champions group to help present the findings from the consultation.

An action plan will be set out to target the top priorities from the consultation. The Participation strategy should emphasise the ethos of the organisation and set out a timeframe for implementation of the actions.

Stage 4 - Review & Evaluation

The Participation Strategy should have a self-evaluation element built in. Evaluation forms part of the organisational change cycle. Organisations will be encouraged to review their strategy on a regular basis. They will be encouraged to go through the Organisational Change process themselves or with a critical friend and update the Participation strategy when needed.

6 weeks after the participation strategy and action plan have been created the facilitator should return to support and encourage the process of change that has been initiated. The facilitator should write a final report with recommendations and send to the organisation.

Overview of Process

Stages	Approx Hours	When	Facilitated by
<p>STAGE 1 - LOOK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial information session/briefing Initial research/review into existing participative structures (2 sessions) Audit with C&YP and adults (2/3 focus groups + prep/write up) "How do C&YP currently participate within the organisation?" 	<p>3</p> <p>9</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Month 1</p>	<p>Facilitator & Worker in Charge</p>
<p>STAGE 2- THINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Young People's Champions Group Staff training around issue of Participation (7 hour training programme + 3 hours prep/write up) Champions Group Training around issue of Participation (weekend residential + 3 hours prep/write up) Senior member group and lead staff (Champions group) plan a consultation on how to bring participation to the organisation (3 sessions + prep/write up) 	<p>8</p> <p>21</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Month 1</p> <p>Month 1 & 2</p> <p>Month 1 & 2</p> <p>Month 2</p>	<p>Worker in Charge</p> <p>Facilitator</p> <p>Facilitator & lead staff</p> <p>Facilitator & lead staff</p>
<p>STAGE 3 - ACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation event carried out with current members of the organisation, plus another reaching out to young people not using the organisation (2 day sessions + prep/write up) Champions group and staff will come together with the facilitator to develop actions from the consultation (1 session + prep/write up) Implementation- Participation Strategy developed 	<p>15</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Month 3</p> <p>Month 3</p> <p>Month 4</p>	<p>Champions group supported by Facilitator & lead staff</p> <p>Facilitator & lead staff</p> <p>Worker in Charge</p>
<p>STAGE 4 - REVIEW/EVALUATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of implementation; this will be an ongoing self evaluation throughout the programme; but this programme will encourage a review on an ongoing basis 		<p>After 6 weeks</p>	<p>Facilitator & Worker in Charge</p>



Stage One - Look

Stage 1 – Look provides an overview of the current participation level and opportunities given to members of the organisation. This external audit/review of the organisation informs the report which outlines “How do Children & Young People currently participate within the organisation?”. This report is presented back to the staff at the beginning of the training.

Expected outcomes

- To explore and understand the current participative practices in the organisation
- To develop a better knowledge of the work of the organisation
- To begin to identify areas of improvement, and plan an appropriate programme for the organisation

Useful tips

Additional information

- Hear by right toolkit - <http://www.nya.org.uk/quality/hear-by-right>
- Checking the scoreboard - <http://kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/resources/participationkit/checkscoreboard.cfm>

Resources required for stage one

- Draft outline of what programme looks like for an organisation
- Details of commitment required for the 4 month process
- Audit toolkit
- Draft Big Deal memorandum of understanding

Method

Part 1

A meeting is established with the centre manager, director or other significant decision makers within an organisation. For a larger organisation, it is recommended that this meeting include members of the senior management team, or department heads.

Initial discussions should take place to find out more details about the organisation, profile of young people attending, opportunities young people have to engage in the decision making around programme plans, organisational matters and management within the organisation. The purpose of this is to allow the external facilitator to get a feel for what the organisation does.

It might be worth building in time for a tour of the facilities, and meeting with other key personnel.

Part 2

The external facilitator agrees with the management to have a series of focus groups, meetings with users, conversations, observations or group work sessions to audit the existing opportunities that are available for young people to participate.

When piloting this programme, the Big Deal workers used a range of tools to audit the opportunities available. Examples are included in the appendix. We would recommend the Big Deal “Look tool” as a more simplistic method of gathering the relevant information.

This tool can also be used with staff and other adults who engage in the organisation.

Part 3

The external facilitator take some time to pull together the findings from the initial audit into a short report – it is recommended that this is something that only paints an overview picture of what currently exists in the organisation, rather than a very detailed report. Collection of responses under each of the five headings would be recommended as a way forward.

Findings are presented back to the management or link staff, and a plan for how the programme will run from Stage two onwards is agreed.

After initial discussions around the findings, the external facilitator and key staff will plan a staff training programme exploring involving young people in decision making. Detailed programme sessions plans for the staff training are included in the next section.

Young Peoples’ group – Champions

At this stage of the programme it would be important to encourage the organisation to consider identifying a group of young people who will work alongside this process. Their function would be to act as advocates for other young people in the organisation. They will lead a youth consultation and discussion on how to improve participation within the organisation, and work with staff to develop a participation strategy or action plan.

The organisation should also be encouraged to identify key staff to support the young peoples group.

It is important that young people are only identified at this point and not engaged in training as it may be decided that after the staff training, more work is required to gain the support of staff in the full process.



Stage Two - Think (Staff Training)

Stage 2 - Think provides the opportunity for all involved to gain a better understanding of Participation and why it is important in the life of a youth organisation. Training for staff and young people is delivered separately.

Expected outcomes

- To explore attitudes to participation with adults and staff in the organisation
- To create empathy for young people and participation
- To understand the role of active participation within youth work
- Understanding the benefits of participation
- To explore the difficulties/ problems associated with participation.
- To explore solutions to avoid problems with participation.

Staff training - Session 1

Duration

This session should last 3 hours.

Useful Tips

Additional information

- CDU website – www.youthworkni.org.uk

Resources required for stage one

- Model of effective practice poster & A Young person's guide to the Youth Work Curriculum (available on request from CDU)
- Flipchart Paper
- 'when you were younger' Questionnaires (see appendix)
- markers and pens

Activity 1

It is important that staff understand the reason for encourage youth participation in youth centres etc. Spend 15 minutes outlining the context of participation in relation to the Model for Effective Practice. Even with staff the young person version of this document is more accessible.

Activity 2

Review of Audit Findings

At this stage of the staff training it would be appropriate to inform the staff of the audit findings. It is important to emphasize that this is just an overview and not a detailed assessment of participation within the organisation. Spend sometime feeding back the audit report and use the finding to discuss if it what the staff expected, what surprised them and did any of the findings upset or excite them.

Activity 3

Statement Stand

Create a continuum where one end of the room is 'totally agree' and the opposite end is 'totally disagree' with varying levels of agreement in between. Choose five or six statements from the list below and explain that you are going to read out a statement. Ask the participants to place themselves along the continuum based of their opinion. Ask participants to explain why they have stood there

According to how much time you have, try to allow a discussion for each statement / generating discussion on the advantages / disadvantages of participants' decisions.

Examples of statements

- Every human being can communicate his or her thoughts and feelings.
- Children and young people know what's best for them.
- Children and young people who commit crimes can't expect to be treated that same as other children and young people.
- Young children are not ready to make decisions for themselves.
- It's better to run separate participation projects and activities for disabled children.
- Too much participation can put children at risk.
- With rights comes responsibility.
- Life for children and young people is better now than 20 years ago.
- Adults are frightened of making mistakes.
- The focus on listening to children has gone too far.
- There's a lot of age discrimination in our country.
- The voting age should be reduced to 16 years.
- Children and adults are equal.
- Adults believe they're more important than children.
- Giving children too many opportunities to make decisions takes away the freedom of childhood.
- Adults who weren't listened to as children find it hardest to change.



Activity 4

As adults we can sometimes forget how it feels to be a young person and how it feels to not be listened to. The following activity is designed to help us empathise with young people and to consider how we felt as young people when we were not listened to.

Give each of the staff members the ‘when you were younger’ questionnaire asking 4 questions:

- i. **What did you hope for?**
- ii. **What were you concerned about?**
- iii. **Give examples of times when seniors or adults listened to you.**
- iv. **Give examples of when you were ignored.**

Allow a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and then ask the staff to give some feedback about how they felt as a young person.

Activity 5

It is important that staff have an understanding of participation. Ask the staff to consider what “participation” means and how does/could it impact the work of their centre.

Evaluate and close the session.

Staff training - Session 2

Duration

This session should last 3 hours.

Resources required for stage one

- Flipchart and markers

Activity 1

This activity is to re-enforce the benefits of participation. Divide the group into sub groups and ask them to consider the benefits of participation. Ask the groups to feedback.

Possible answers:

- Increased sense of ownership
- Young people have a better understanding of decision making
- Shared responsibility on decision making
- Creates an inclusive culture
- More relevant activities/programme
- Greater scope for creative thinking
- Increased funding opportunities

Activity 2

Like all processes that are about creating change there are always possible difficulties and problems. During this activity it is chance to identify the pitfalls and explore solutions/actions that may prevent the problems

Possible answers:

- Power struggle
- Not all people in support of participation
- Lack of commitment
- Young people bored at management meetings
- Tokenism



Activity 3

This activity is to review what areas of participation already exist, how these could be improved and what support is needed to help achieve greater participation.

- Divide larger group into smaller group and ask them to discuss what areas of participation currently exist.
- Identify 3 actions to improve their participatory practices (identify new areas or ways to improve existing practice.)
- Identify what support they need

Useful Tips

It is important that all staff are made available for this stage of the process. It may require the centre or organisation to be closed to users. The staff training should take at least 2 sessions to complete. At this stage it is important for the external facilitator to assess whether it is appropriate to begin the Young people's training. As previously stated this decision should be based on the general attitude and support to participation by the staff team.

Stage Two - Think (Young People Training)

The young people or champions group is a group of young people from the organisation who are keen to 'champion' the voice and opinions of members from the organisation. The group should ideally not exceed 10 young people. Like the staff and management, the champions group take part in training. It is the responsibility of the leader-in-charge to identify the group of young people and be available to support the group throughout the training and consultations.

As the experience and ability of each group differs, it is important the training for the group is appropriate to their abilities and needs. This may mean that training is delivered during a residential, full days or over a series of evenings. Therefore we have highlighted essential areas of learning that should be addressed rather than a prescriptive session plan. In this section there is a selection of activities that may help you explore these areas.

Expected outcomes

- To explore attitudes to participation with young people
- To understand the role of active participation within youth work
- Understanding the benefits of participation
- To develop young people's skills in communication, decision making, negotiation, teamwork, leadership and consultation/research.

Essential areas of Learning

Team Building

Team Building is important as teams can accomplish something much bigger and work more effectively than a group of the same individuals working on their own.

More importantly, real benefits include:

- A feeling of identity
- On-going support
- Creative pooling of ideas
- Increased confidence
- Things tend to work better as a result of team effort
- You aren't alone



Teamwork Exercise - Connections

Aim: To support the group to get to know each other better and to feel connected to others in the group.

Resources: None

Time: 30mins

Activity:

You have 10-15 mins to discover an interesting or surprising and separate connection you have with each person in your team. For large groups split into smaller groups of 6-8. Each connection must be different with each person not a single connection that every team member shares.

An interesting and surprising connection is not

- Living in the same area
- Going to the same organisation, youth centre or work place
- Same hair colour etc

Reflection questions

1. How does knowing more about each other and having connections promote teamwork?
2. What could prevent people from getting to know each other and working well together?
3. How can this group ensure that they form a safe, connected and cohesive group?

Communication

In order for young people to negotiate with adults and to represent other young people it is very important that they are given the opportunity to improve and develop their communication skills. This should include developing skills in types of verbal and non-verbal communication, being listened to and active listening, being understood and understanding others.

Communication Exercise 1 – Colourful Day

Aim: To help groups realise that everyone sees things differently and that when communicating it is important to be aware of this so that you understand others and are understood.

Resources: Paper, pens

Time: 20mins

Activity

Ask the group to close their eyes and think of the days of the week. What colour is each day. Ask each person to write down the colours and corresponding days.

Ask everyone to share their colours and day and if they know why they associate those particular colours with certain days. Discuss how people can have different views of the same thing.

Reflection questions

1. How could seeing things differently hinder communication?
2. How can you overcome these barriers and difficulties?



Communication Exercise 2 – Early Bird vs Second Mouse

Aim: To help the group to develop communication skills through presentations, debates and discussions, to develop the group’s awareness of constructing an argument and convincing others. It also gives the young people an opportunity to consider different aspects to a strategy. Is it better to lead the way or learn from others mistakes?

Resources: Paper, pens

Time: 30mins

Activity

Comedian Stephen Wright states, “The early bird may get the worm but the second mouse gets the cheese”.

Split the group into 2. Group 1 ‘the early bird’ and group 2 ‘the second mouse’. Each group has 10 -15 mins to prepare a 1min presentation on why their strategy would be best for the champion’s group. Once groups have presented then encourage an open debate for 5 mins.

Reflection questions

1. Was one strategy decided on
2. What techniques and skills were used to present and convince?
3. What learning can be taken from this exercise for this group?

Decision Making

Decision-making is a very important skill for young people as it allows them to weigh up the pros and cons, learn to listen to others and negotiate and compromise. It can also promote conflict resolution skills and accepting difference.

Participation

Young people have no shortage of opinions and ideas however, sometimes the concept of sharing power and decision making with adults is tokenistic or non-existent beyond the sharing of ideas in either a formal or informal manner.

It is important to explore the importance of young people's participation in decisions that affect them as well as building up their confidence in themselves and the process.

Participation Exercise 1 – No Man Is An Island

Aim: To support the participants to look at the various areas of their lives and to explore the level of decision-making power they have in each area.

Resources: Paper, Felt tips

Time: 60 mins

Activity:

“No man is an island” is a quote by John Donne. This is true of the decisions that are made daily that affect our lives –no one has sole responsibility over every decision that affects them. Ask each participant to draw the outline of an island. On the island draw the following;

- Mountains to represent the decisions you have sole responsibility for in your life.
- Rivers to represent decisions about your life where the responsibility is shared.
- Desert to represent areas of your life where you have no decision making power.
- Roads to represent decisions you will have more control of in the future.
- Beaches to represent decisions you would like to have more of a say in.

Ask the group to share their islands and discuss the decisions included.

Reflection question

- If you had to draw an island to represent the decision making power you have in this youth organisation/centre what would it look like?



Participation Exercise 2 – Agree / Disagree

Aim: To help the participants explore issues and opinions relating to young people’s participation in decision-making.

Resources: Statements, Agree/Disagree signs

Time: 30 mins

Activity:

Create a continuum where one end of the room is totally agree and the opposite end is totally disagree with varying level of agreement in between.

Read out the following statement and ask participants to stand where they feel most appropriate either near to agree or disagree.

- Young people can’t make good decisions.
- Young people don’t know what they want.
- Adults don’t listen to young people.
- Young people should have more say in this organisation
- Every human being can communicate his or her thoughts and feelings.
- Children and young people know what’s best for them.
- Children and young people who commit crimes can’t expect to be treated that same as other children and young people.
- Young children are not ready to make decisions for themselves.
- Too much participation can put children at risk.
- With rights comes responsibility.
- Life for children and young people is better now than 20 years ago.
- Adults are frightened of making mistakes.
- The focus on listening to children has gone too far.
- There’s a lot of age discrimination in our country.
- The voting age should be reduced to 16 years.
- Children and adults are equal.
- Listening to children and young people helps them to stay safe.
- Adults believe they’re more important than children.
- Giving children too many opportunities to make decisions takes away the freedom of childhood.
- Adults who weren’t listened to as children find it hardest to change.

Discuss the reasons that the participants agree/disagree after each statement.

Participation Exercise 3 – SCORE

Aim: To support participant in exploring youth participation in organisational decision-making.

Resources: Flip Chart and markers

Time: 45 mins

Activity:

SCORE is a similar model to SWOT. Lay out 5 Flip Charts each with one of the following headings.

Strengths, Challenges, Options, Responses, Effectiveness

Split the group into 5, ask each smaller group to take a flip chart and fill in ideas below the heading relating to young people being involved in decision making within their organisation (see below). After a few minutes rotate so each group has the opportunity to contribute under each heading. At the end of the activity it may be appropriate to review the comments and suggestions given to ensure a full understanding of them.

Strengths -

What are the capabilities of those involved?

What would the benefits be for the organisation and all involved?

What is the potential?

Challenges -

What is needed?

What are the barriers to young people's participation?

Options -

What are all the options of what could happen?

How do others do it?

Responses -

How will the organisation, adults and young people respond if nothing happens?

How the organisation, adults and young people respond if young people participate in decision-making?

Effectiveness -

How could young people's participation be effective?



Stage Three - Act

Stage 3 - Act has two key elements:

- the champions group using their learning to carry out a consultation and then present their findings to the staff,
- staff and the champions group working together to negotiate an action plan and participation strategy.

It is important that the facilitator creates the space for the whole group to work out the action plan and take ownership of it, as they will be carrying it out. It may be appropriate for the facilitator to suggest some short-term wins to be included in the action to prevent a loss of momentum while working on larger or more long-term changes.

Expected outcomes

- The champion's group will have gained an understanding of different consultation methods.
- The champions groups will have consulted with the organisation's members using an appropriate method of consultation.
- Information will have been received that will inform the organisation's participation action plan.
- A Participation action will have been created in partnership between adults and young people.

Planning a method of consultation

Why Consult with Young People?

The consultation results will form the basis of the action plan for the champions group. The results are vital to ensuring the action plans are relevant to moving the young people forward in their involvement in decision making within their club or organisation, and establish what decisions need to be taken to further their success.

The consultation can be divided into two sections:

Section 1 - Gauging the status of decision making within the club

- Determine the level of decision making at present
- How the young people are engaged in decision making
- What support is available to the group regarding decision making

Section 2 - How members perceive the club

- Views on programming
- Building décor/environment
- Staff engagement

Methods of Consultation

The young people can choose to consult their peers through:

- focus groups,
- questionnaires,
- one to one interviews,
- openspace technology.

See - [Information on Methods of Consultations](#)

Choosing your method of consultation - Flipchart exercise

Aim: To help the champion's group to explore different methods of consultation and decide upon the most appropriate method for their organisation.

Duration: 60 mins/ can be extended to two sessions.

Resources: flipchart /pens

Part one

Place the headings focus group/ interviews/ questionnaires and open space on the flipchart paper. Promote a group discussion on what the meanings of the headings are.

Part two

Decide upon what is the aim of the consultation and what type of questions will have to be asked. Divide the group into smaller numbers and give them a sheet of the A3 headed paper. Ask the group to write down pros and cons on post it notes for each type of consultation method.

[Refer to useful resource on pg19 - 21 to aid the reflection process regarding the young people's feedback.](#)

Review your findings

Top tips

- Ensure someone has a responsibility for collecting and keeping safe the questionnaires, response notes or video footage.
- Illustrate on a bar graph how many people gave what percentage response.



After you have the figures, engage in a discussion within the champions group to review the responses, and pick out what could be the clear areas for development. For example do you have a large number of young people stating they would like to be involved in programming decisions?

If so it's about addressing in your action plans the best method for engaging young people in programming decisions. There may be various levels of participation from suggestion boxes to having a meeting engaging young people in programming decisions.

Information on Methods of Consultations Resource

Using a questionnaire as a consultation method

Designing a questionnaire

Top tips:

- Ensure you know what you want to achieve in your consultation. Think about what your group's research goals are and what you would have to ask your respondents to achieve those goals
- Keep your questionnaires/ focus group questions short and relevant.
- Offer incentives for respondents
- Be creative use colour in your questionnaire

General principles when writing questions

- **Avoid leading questions:** "Wouldn't you say that...", "Isn't it fair to say..."
- **Be specific.** Avoid words like "regularly", "often", or "locally" – as everyone's idea of what is regular, often or local will be different.
- **Avoid jargon** – ensure your language caters for all levels of literacy. Remember for some respondents English may be their second language.
- **Avoid double-barrelled questions:** "Do you enjoy playing badminton and tennis?". Ask for one piece of information at a time.
- **Avoid double negatives** – e.g. instead of asking respondents whether they agree with the negative statement, "Smoking in public places should not be abolished", use the positive "Smoking in public places should be abolished".
- **Minimise bias**

Question order

- Put the most important items in first half of questionnaire. Many people don't complete questionnaires. This will ensure you get the most significant data from non-finishers.
- Don't start with awkward or embarrassing questions – respondents may just give up.
- Start with easy and non-threatening questions. This encourages respondents to carry on with the questionnaire.
- Go from the general to the particular.
- Go from factual to abstract questions.
- Go from closed to open questions.
- Leave demographic and personal questions until last.

Using Focus Groups as a consultation method

What are focus groups?

A focus group involves encouraging an invited group of participants to share their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and ideas on certain subject. Organising focus groups within an organisation can also be very useful in encouraging participation and building interest within the organisation.

Running focus groups

The Circle

The circular chair arrangement signifies that all are equal here--both as knowers and learners. Participants are all facing each other equally, with the opportunity to work together to discuss and resolve issues, if they so choose.

If appropriate, ask the participants to introduce themselves and/or wear nametags. Most importantly, **all questions you ask should be open and neutral**. It's also important for the facilitator to be aware of participants' energy and concentration levels and provide short breaks if necessary. Ideally the facilitator should be using the focus groups to give member of the champion's group an opportunity to develop communication skills and group work skills by leading some of the discussions etc. The facilitator should encourage free-flowing discussion around the relevant issue(s).



Other tips for running focus groups include:

- **Start on an issue people have strong feelings about** and are familiar with
- Phrase issues in terms people will be familiar with
- Let young people know their contributions are valuable (both through what you say and also your body language)

It's also important that the facilitator realises that:

- **It may be necessary for them to step in** and keep the session on-track
- Disagreements and debates are useful when they lead to new and interesting ideas, but have to be managed carefully
- Issues of power and privacy need to be managed sensitively

Focus groups should end with the facilitator winding-up the session by stressing all that has achieved and casting it in a positive light.

Using Open Space Technology as a consultation method

What is Open space technology?

It is a facilitation method in which people can identify specific issues on a given topic, self-select into discussion groups, and work with the issue with people also concerned with that issue. This can be a great way of consulting with young people as the young people identify the topics of discussion and can choose to engage with several conversations/discussion groups. It is a very fluid method of consultation as people can move from group to group and input as they feel appropriate.

To find out in more detail about the process of how to facilitate open space, please follow the link: <http://freechild.org/Firestarter/OpenSpace.htm>

Acknowledgements

Focus groups

<http://www.webcredible.co.uk/user-friendly-resources/web-usability/focus-groups.shtml>

Open space

<http://freechild.org/Firestarter/OpenSpace.htm>

At this stage of the process it is important for the adults and Champion's group to come together and create a joint participation action plan. This plan also becomes the point of reference for reviewing the embedding of a participation ethos within the organisation. Below are a number of steps that will help the organisation to create an achievable action plan.

Action Planning

Step 1: Examine the consultation findings and list all the key areas for change.

Step 2: Negotiate the key changes that are realistically possible in the next 6 months. List these in order of priority. Ensure that at least one change is quick and tangible so that the young people's group, other young people in the organisation and adults working in and managing the organisation, will see the results.

Step 3: Start to complete the action planning form -Name the change – be specific.

Step 4: Who needs to be involved – remember to include young people their participation is to be continual.

Step 5: Set a deadline – when will this change have occurred or be completed.

Step 6: How will you know when it has been achieved? What will have occurred? What will be different?

Step 7: This is a reflection and monitoring tool to ensure the action plan is carried through. Here you record if the action has been completed and what further learning or actions need to take place to ensure this action is fulfilled and embedded.

Checklist of things to accomplish during the Plan Phase:

- **Set realistic, achievable goals and objectives for action**
- **Identify the type of action they want to use to address the issues/changes planned**
- **Identify possible supporters, stakeholders and challengers**
- **Determine timeline of various project elements**
- **Create evaluation criteria**
- **Develop an action plan (a summary of all the above components)**



Stage Four - Review/Evaluate

The process of embedding an ethos and culture of participation into the life of the organisation should be ongoing and Organisational Change should not be used as a short-term project.

As with all work it is important to evaluate and review it. Organisational change is no different. Especially with a process like Organisational Change it is important someone external to the organisation completes the review in order to ensure total impartiality. This also gives weight and integrity to the evaluation should the organisation wish to use it for funders etc.

The person reviewing the process could be the external facilitator who delivered the training at the start of the process or it may be someone who wishes to act as a critical friend to the organisation. A critical friend is just someone who has an interest in the organisation and wishes to support it but has no direct involvement in the decision-making processes within it. Should the organisation be registered with the Youth Service it may be appropriate for the senior youth worker to review the process as part of their regular club visits.

The action plan created and implemented as part of stage 3 is just one of the resources that can be used to review and evaluate Organisational Change. Organisations may also wish to use the audit findings from the start of the process to assess if or how the culture has changed within the organisation.

It is also important the findings from any evaluation or review are then used when creating a new action plan and so the cycle continues.