

Audience Development Toolkit for Libraries: Children & Young People



A resource by Emma Parsons for
Curious Minds

EMMA


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Audience Development: Arts Council England's definition

'The term **audience development** describes activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential **audiences** and to help arts organisations to **develop** ongoing relationships with **audiences**.'

Current audience knowledge

Discuss:

- What do you already know about them and how they use the library?
- What don't you know that would be useful?
- Who are your priority audiences?

Ways of grouping audiences

Geographic

- Customer location
- e.g. Neighbourhood

Demographic

- Age, gender, socio-economic group
- e.g. under-16s, NEETs

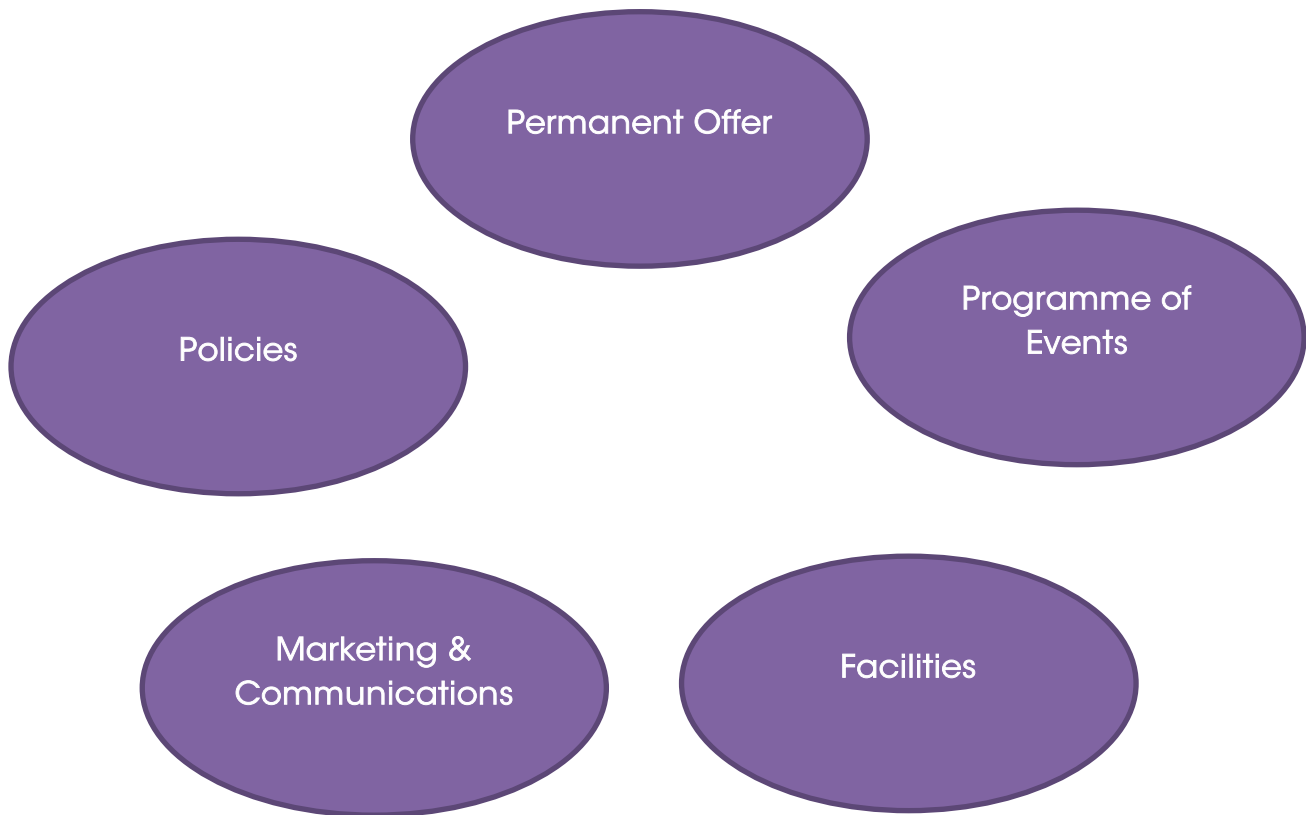
Behavioural

- Frequency of visit, membership, use of facilities
- e.g. frequent borrower, PC user, lunchtime attender

Psychographic

- Attitudes, values, lifestyle, motivations
 - e.g. wants to go to Uni, likes to read bestsellers
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Audit your organisation



Consultation

- What is USEFUL to know (not just interesting)?
- Useful = things that will inform your decisions
- Identify BARRIERS to using your service
- Identify DRIVERS to use it in future

Consultation Tips

- Be prepared! Have questions written in advance for interviews and focus groups.
 - Incentivise – what’s in it for them?
 - Explain why and what will happen with information. Ask permission. Anonymise if appropriate.
 - Listen, don’t judge.
 - Record verbatim.
 - Mix of quality and quantity.
 - Analyse and suggest recommendations.
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Marketing Tips

- Sell the sizzle not the sausage – experience & benefits
- Use the language and media channel your audience prefer
- With new audiences, go out to them, don't expect them to come to you first
- Peer-to-peer marketing works - spread the word, recommend to others – social media
- Images speak a thousand words
- www.cilip.co.uk/blog/9-great-library-marketing-books

Cultural Education Challenge and Local Cultural Education Partnerships

- The Cultural Education Challenge is a call to arms led by ACE and Department for Education
- Work together to ensure all children get opportunity to create, compose, perform, visit, experience and participate, know understand and review.
- An LCEP is a multi-sector partnership group who will work together to create a plan to join-up and improve cultural education for CYP
- 23 focus areas for LCEPs in the North West.

Partnerships

- Who do you work with now?
- Different types – access to audiences; gatekeepers; delivery; knowledge; funding... more?
- What makes a successful partnership?

Where to find new ideas?

- Other libraries (worldwide), Libraries Taskforce, INELI
- Reading Agency
- Literature festivals, arts & heritage organisations
- Resource websites like Culture Hive, Audience Agency
- Housing associations, charities, health organisations
- Conferences, seminars
- TED talks
- Partners – eg.LCEPs

Tips from Young People

- Don't make assumptions about their interests
 - Communicate their way
 - Social life is everything
 - Take them behind the scenes
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- Take them out
 - Plug sockets
 - Appeal of the library as a workplace
 - Emphasise benefits for their futures
 - Provide food

Evaluate & Review

- Review whether you met your objectives and your targets
- Baseline shows the distance travelled
- Measuring outputs – monitoring numbers
- Measuring outcomes – what’s changed?
- What’s working, what’s not, for staff, partners & participants
- Regular time to reflect

Action Plan

- Ask yourself –
 - What is your objective
 - What is your target audience (be specific)
 - What do you know about your audience?
 - What don’t you know and how can you find out?
 - How can you measure success?
 - Then work up an action plan – tasks, costs, resources, timings, who delivers, how to measure
 - Deliver it
 - Review it
-

In this post, I will focus on what I believe to be the most important, but easily over looked element of planning, which is Consultation, which is just simply asking the young people what they want.

This first step seems so obvious; however, I am always amazed at how many youth workers neglect the importance of consultation. Instead they steam ahead with a great idea they have had for a project and put in time and effort planning and developing it, only to find out at the point of delivery that the young people are not that interested. What a waste of valuable time and energy. This does not mean that their idea was a bad one; it was just not what that particular group wanted to do. If only they would have asked the group first.

How would you like it?

Just imagine, someone coming into your home, having a look around and then making arrangement to redecorate your living room without consulting you about it first. How would you feel? I know I would not be too happy about that.

How different it would be if that same person came and asked you the following questions;

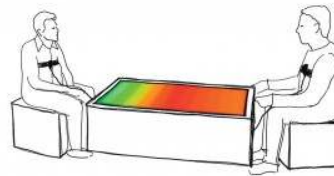
Have you considered decorating? What colours do you like? What theme would you choose? Have a look through these catalogues and see if anything catches your eye.

Straight away, you feel involved in the process and have an opportunity to express your views and opinions on not only the end product but the entire process. This is exactly what we need to give to young people.

The active involvement of young people in the development of projects and programme for them is the key to an outstanding and successful project.

When you start by asking young people what they want to do and helping them explore and expand their ideas, you can not go far wrong.

So let's have a look at a few ways you can do this.



Conversation:

You will be amazed at just how much you can learn through a simple conversation with a group of young people, if you ask the right questions, allow them to answer and listen keenly to what they say. When I first meet a young person who attends a youth centre, I like to ask them the following questions; What's your name? How long have you been coming here? What do you like / dislike about the project? How could we make it better? Just by asking these simple questions to a number of young people within a centre or project has given me more than enough information to begin generating some ideas.



Stickers, Post it's and Flip Chart:

What I have found to be really useful, is to pre-print a load of sticker sheets with a varied selection of activity ideas and ask the young people to stick the ones they would like to do on a flip chart sheet. I would also provide Post it notes and pens for them to write their own ideas.

Youth Forum:

It is so easy to get youth forums wrong simply because of the perception many people have of what a youth forum should look like and how it should function. The title paints a picture of a formal meeting around a large table with serious people discussing serious matters. However, a youth forum does not have to be formal, and it shouldn't be. I think youth forums work best when they are relaxed, informal and enjoyable. It could just be a few group members representing the view of the wider group and feeding back on their behalf.



Ideas box:

A large well signed box, placed within the centre with squares of paper next to it is useful for ongoing consultations. Or if it is street based session, it could be an Ideas bag. For maximum impact, place a large sign next to or above the box stating 'We need your ideas' or 'Tell us what you want'. This gives the young people direction and instruction.

Surveys:

You can produce a short questionnaire and print them off for the group to complete. Or, we all know that most young people spend a lot of time online, so you could make use of a site such as www.SurveyMonkey.com, and email the link to young people or put a poster up near the computers in the centre.

7 Consultation mistakes to avoid.

1. **Making the process long and formal.** - What ever method you choose to use, keep it short and move quickly though the activities, but don't rush it.
2. **Holding the session outside of normal delivery hours** – Integrate your consultation session into your normal session (get them while they are available)
3. **Making a big thing about it.** – This links to the above point. Many young people don't want to be seen to be too enthusiastic, so play it down
4. **Not feeding back any progress to the group** - Young people want to see things happen and see them happen fast, even if it is only small steps
5. **Not building a relationship with the group first.** – If you are new to the group, get to know them first before you try to engage them in the process
6. **Making your multiple choice answers too restrictive** - multiple choice answers are good, but don't let them limit the young people's choice of response.
7. **Asking open-ended questions that are not useful** – For example "What do you want to do?"

Valuing their views

The views of the young people you will be working with are extremely valuable, and you will want to ensure that they are aware of this fact. I have found that some young people don't engage because they feel that their views don't matter, or that nothing is going to happen with them. Make take every opportunity not only to encourage their activities participation but also help them to realise the value of the contribution.



7 things you can do to enhance young people's involvement:

1. **Involve** young people in all stages of planning, managing and evaluating projects.
2. **Create opportunities** for young people to express their concerns and perspectives on issues.
3. **Respect young people** and talk to them as you would talk to an adult.
4. **Avoid interrupting** young people when they are talking.
5. **Ask young people** how you can support them to making things happen.
6. **Avoid generalising** young people's behaviour, opinions or ideas.
7. **Ask young people** for their advice on matters.

Incentives for engagement

Young people are much more likely to engage in something if they have an incentive. In some cases, I have heard youth workers say that the incentive is the project they are planning; however, that project may not happen until weeks after the consultation has taken place. I have found it useful to offer incentives for participation in each key stage of the process.

7 incentives that young people love

1. **Food** (Pizza is always a winner)
2. **Cinema Tickets** (I try to provide a pass for two, so they can take a friend)
3. **Bus, Tram or Train passes** (Most young people are dependent on public transport)
4. **Mobile phone top up's** (make sure you find out what network they are on first)
5. **High street gift cards** (or ask the group if they want voucher for a specific store)
6. **Prize draws** (young people love a competition)
7. **Press coverage** (Draft an article for your local press office and arrange for a photo shoot)

Knowing what is out of reach



Once you have received the feedback from the group, you are almost ready to progress to the planning stage, however, before you move forward, you need to compile and

process your findings and filter out the things that you know you are not capable of doing. Be clear with the group that you are not discounting the ideas; you are just being truthful with them as to what is in your reach and what is not.

Don't get lazy

During this filter process, ask yourself, "am I really unable to do this or am I worried that it might take me out of my comfort zone and stretch me or cause me more work?" If your answer is the latter, then I encourage you to overcome that attitude if you really want to push the boundaries of your practice.

What works for you?

These are just a few things that I have found useful, but I am sure you have got many more suggestions and tips on consulting young people effectively, so please share them.

Log on to www.youthworktoolbox.com and leave a comment.

Email: content@youthworktoolbox.com

Twitter: @Youthwork_Tools

Developing Young Audiences – Further Information and Resources

General advice

Curious Minds – www.curiousminds.org.uk for Arts Award, news, project info (eg. Strong Voices, Trailblaze, Young Associates).

The Reading Agency website www.readingagency.org.uk includes evaluation report on their programmes

National Youth Agency – www.nya.org.uk

Young Advisors national network <http://www.youngadvisors.org.uk/>

British Youth Council <http://www.byc.org.uk>

Big Lottery Fund advice on working with young people including consultation - <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/research/children-young-people-and-families>

www.culturehive.co.uk for loads of resources and reports.

'Not for the Likes of You' report by Morton Smyth - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/not-for-the-likes-of-you-how-to-reach-a-broader-audience>

Guide to writing an audience development plan - <https://archive.cilip.org.uk/blog/9-great-library-marketing-books>

Marketing books list - www.cilip.co.uk/blog/9-great-library-marketing-books

Nina Simon "The Participatory Museum" and her blog at <http://museumtwo.blogspot.co.uk/>

Examples of projects

British Library Labs competition to encourage innovative use of digital data - <http://labs.bl.uk/British+Library+Labs+Competition>

Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference, papers from 2016 - <http://dcdconference.com/dcdc16-papers/>

'Bookstart Corner - Developing young children's love of reading' 2013 report by BookTrust - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/bookstart-corner>

The Evolve Project to involve children and young people in US libraries - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/improving-children-and-young-peoples-engagement-with-libraries>

The Reading Agency – Reading Activists - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/engaging-with-disadvantaged-young-people-through-the-reading-activists-programme>

The Reading Agency – Chatterbooks - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/engaging-children-with-disabilities-in-libraries>

Digital Skills Sharing - ACE Library case study - <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-libraries/libraries-programmes-and-initiatives>



Acknowledgements

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'How To Consult Young People Effectively' resource generously shared by **Youth Work Toolbox Limited**
<http://www.youthworktoolbox.com>

