

YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Handout for staff

Principles of high-quality YSA:

Youth-Led

Students need to be part of decision making and consulted on all elements of their project.

Social Impact

Every project needs to have an impact on the community or environment and this impact needs to be real and measured.

Challenging

Students taking part need to be pushed out of their comfort zone and challenged so that they learn new skills.

Embedded & Progressive

Social action should become a habit for life and there should be opportunities around for students to engage in.

Reflective

There should be opportunities to reflect throughout the project so that students understand the impact on them.

1

Recruit students

Social action should be completed in groups - it is generally not an individual activity. You might work with classes in college, pastoral groups or have students sign up to come together to form a group. You can recruit through freshers events, stalls, student communications and using your student facing staff and students' union.

2

Identify a need or cause for the project

This might come from:

- Student voice - run activities with your group to help them find a cause that they care about.
- An organisation - a charity or community organisation might approach you with a project in mind.
- A need in the college - students or staff in the college might see an issue that needs to be addressed.

TOP TIP

You do not need to have all the ideas and solutions at the start of the project. Go through the process with students and find out their interests.

3

Learn more about the chosen issue

Knowing more about the issue will help students to address it. Have students research, get speakers in or gain more student voice to find out more about the issue they are tackling.

4

Come up with a project idea

Work with your group to get ideas on how to address their issue. It's a good opportunity to talk to community organisations at this stage and find out how the group can collaborate with them.

The project might look like:

- A campaign gathering public support and lobbying leaders to make changes.
- Supporting a charity with the work they do by giving them your time, fundraising or providing resources.
- Doing an action to address an issue like an event or gathering.

TOP TIP

Challenge students to come up with new ideas - bake sales don't have big impact. Get creative and speak to organisations about solutions to the issue.

The amount that you help will depend on the level of your group, but try to challenge them to come up with their own ideas.

5

Plan and prepare for the project

Facilitate the group to work in a team to come up with a task list that needs to be done to complete the project. Assign tasks and roles to students together. Give students roles based on skills they want or need to develop. Utilise existing resources or fundraise to buy resources needed for the project.

6

Reflect with your students

Create space to facilitate reflection with the students both during and especially at the end of your project. You can make reflection engaging by running activities with the group.

TOP TIPS

- Social action isn't just about volunteering and doing a tick box exercise, it is about real advocacy and empowerment and giving young people the skills to act on issues that affect them. A high-quality project should meet all the principles.
- Student ownership of the projects is important, as the goal of YSA is to increase their skills and give them opportunities. Your role is to facilitate and guide students through the project and help them to make decisions and complete tasks themselves.
- Delays in the project often come up during the planning and preparation phase. Develop a clear plan with your group for this phase and set deadlines. Be flexible to changes - setbacks are common due to the nature of projects.
- Ensure that students consider how impact will be measured before the delivery of the project, so that it is planned for and considered. This can be an assigned role and students should plan how they will collect the information.

If you need help with any stage, contact the Regional Enrichment Coordinator for support.

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