Sexual Health Youth Initiative Project

Seeding Grants Project Guide

Introduction

Phase 1 – Exploration
Why do you want to do a Sexual Health Youth Initiative project?
Coming up with a project idea
Local impact/ target audience
Developing a Project aim and Objectives

Phase 2 – Preparation
What do you need to prepare?
Planning and scheduling
Planning your budget

Phase 3 – Implementation
Participation
Monitoring finance
Promotion

Phase 4 – Evaluation
Some questions
Some tips
Some tools

Phase 5 – Transfer
Share your outcome
Next steps

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**Introduction**

Hang onto this guide! It can be used as a planning guide throughout the process of planning, implementing and evaluating a sexual health initiative project. It provides advice and learning from youth groups and young people who have identified Five DISTINCT PHASES as the main components of all projects:

The following sections will go through each of these phases and highlight the areas that you need to focus on.

**Phase 1**

**Exploration**

**Why do you want to do a Sexual Health Youth Initiative project?**

Defining the project is one of the most important things your group should consider when starting to develop a project.

Some questions that could form the basis of discussion are:

- What do you (as individuals and as a group) expect to get out of the project?
- Is there enough interest in the group to complete a project?
- Do you have the resources (time/money/people) required to complete the project?
- What impact will your project have on the local community?

As a group, consider how you would answer these questions before going any further with their idea. You should be comfortable and confident in your answers to these questions before proceeding.

**Coming up with a Project Idea**

In choosing a theme for your project the list of possibilities is endless. It is important that you choose an area(s) which is relevant to your group and your community, whether it be at local, regional, state-wide or targeted.

Is there an issue or theme which is of particular interest to your group e.g. access to sexual health clinics or availability of condoms? Is there a particular way that you, as a group, like to work together e.g. through social media, drama, music, peer education, sports, discussion sessions?

Find out as much as you can on sexual health in your area. Browse the internet, talk to your Coach and contact your local health promotion for local research or data as well as talking to some sexual health experts. Maybe there are other groups in the area who have already done a project? Talk to them about their experiences.
Local impact/ target audience

A Sexual Health Youth Initiative project can have a strong impact whether at a local, regional or national level. Ask yourself the following questions about your project:

• Who in the community will benefit from our project?
• What supports are available to us in the community? (Young people, health promotion officers, sexual health clinics, Local Council, General Practice, schools, youth groups)
• What are the main challenges that young people/the community face?
• Is our project theme something that is of local, regional, state importance?
• How will the group consult and/or communicate with the community? (Survey, media, forums, social media)
• How could the results from our project be shared at local, regional, state level? (Media, forums, publications, social media)

Do you think you could do more to make the answers to these questions a part of your project? If so you’re on the road to delivering a project with a strong impact.

Partnerships and support

Partners are groups or organisations with shared ideas, values or goals. Examples may include a youth centre, school, university or sporting club. They can assist in providing resources or provide a space for you to work from or assigning a coach to assist you. The role of the Coach can be to mentor or facilitate, suggest ideas or guide the group through the project. You can also seek support from Youth Workers, Youth and Community Development Officers, teachers, youth leaders or leaders of youth organisations.

Think outside the box. Other partners might include your local sexual health clinic or General Practice, a local business or even online community.

Developing a Project Aim and Objectives

The aim of a project reflects the first priority of the project. The aim define why the project exists and what it ideally would like to achieve. At the end of the Exploration Phase you should be able to broadly state what the aim of the project i.e. what you hope to get out of it or what you hope will happen as a result of it. TO achieve your overall project aim, you will need some objectives to achieve this. Follow the SMART principles to get you project started.

SMART:

Simply stated and easy to understand

Measurable against clear performance targets
Achievable by the individuals undertaking them

Realistic but challenging

Timed – so your plan can be achieved within the project duration

In the next phase, Preparation, you will use the aim and objectives to structure the development of your project further.

Example

Aim:

• To increase the number of young people going to for a sexual health screen at Wagga Wagga Medical Centre by 5% by March 2014.

Objectives:

• To increase knowledge and awareness of sexual health services for young people in Wagga Wagga
• To reduce barriers to sexual health screening by highlighting ease of testing for young people in Wagga Wagga

S- To increase the number of young people going to for a sexual health screen at Wagga Wagga Medical Centre.

M- Pick a realistic number- increase by 5%

A- Ensure you have formed the partnership with Wagga Wagga Medical centre and your youth centre before commencing project.

R- This is where your research comes in. Studies show us that young people go to their GP at least once a year. We need to encourage them to ask for a test.

T- Task to be completed by March 2014.

Think about:

• Who else needs to be involved? Are there any other partners, organisations or groups?
• What do you want to get out of your project?
• How will you use the skills you develop during your project in your regular group activities?
• Who do you think your project will have an impact on?
• What do you think will be worth sharing and who would you share it with?
• What resources do you have/need?
• What will you have to do to collect ‘results’ during the project (and who will do that)?
Based on your answers to these questions you can start to incorporate your ideas into the overall project plan. This is the time to show how proud you are of your project and to generate creative ways of sharing it with others.

The rest of the project plan should flow from here. Here’s an example of some strategies to enact the Wagga Wagga example:

• Develop a short video/film that encapsulates the process of attending Wagga Wagga Medical Centre for a sexual health screen;

• Utilise the finished video on the local youth service website as an educational tool, providing viewers a virtual experience of what to expect when visiting the service for a sexual health screen;

• Provide information about sexual health screening processes as factsheets on the youth centre, Wagga Wagga Medical Centre and local council website to support video/film;

• Work with local community networks and youth interagencies around Wagga to promote the video as an educational tool

Phase 2

Preparation

What do you need to prepare?

Take time to sit down together as a group and look at the types of preparation activities that will be undertaken. Working in a team can be great fun, but brings its own challenges. It’s a really good idea to look at how you can work best as a team at the preparation phase of the project as it can make the project a much more enjoyable experience.

Make a list of what exactly you need to prepare. What type of preparation activities will you do, what is involved in them, when will they be done and who will be responsible for them? Here are some tips:

Set ground rules/group contract
At the start of your project it is important to think about some commonly agreed rules on decision-making, responsibilities, communication and time, and how to agree/disagree.

Value the different skills and talents of each group member
Team members need to know and use each other’s skills.

Agree on how you will make decisions
Conflict and disagreement are normal. The emphasis should be on finding a solution to a disagreement rather than focussing on personalities.

Write it down
It is very useful to prepare a planning chart and to mark it according to how the project will be phased, including important dates such as the start and finish date, group deadlines etc. This should be in a place where the whole group sees it regularly (google ‘gantt chart’). Throughout the preparation phase it is important to allow time for the team to develop, to ensure that everybody involved has a role and that group meetings/reporting back is facilitated. This is also the time to start thinking about what you as an individual want to learn and gain from taking an active part in the project. Although it’s sometimes hard to imagine it, the preparation phase is also the time to consider your plan for the Transfer of Results. So discuss and plan how you want to share your project impact and who it might be best to deliver this information to once your project has ended.

**How to identify needs and develop skills for your project**

It’s important that all members of the group are interested in the theme of the project and committed to their involvement for the whole duration of the project. (Make sure your timetable doesn’t clash with exams, holidays, etc.)

When you have decided on what you want to do for your project, divide the project into key tasks. Then look at each task and see what skills are needed to complete them. If there are any gaps between the task and the skills needed, think about what training might help you as a group to bridge that gap.

Look to your Coach to support you in identifying where you might get training and don’t forget to add those training costs into your overall budget

**Planning and Scheduling**

Your project can last between three and nine months, as long as it is completed by March 2014. As part of your grant application you need to include a detailed work plan of how you will implement your project. This is done by taking your objectives, breaking them down into activities and deciding when they need to be done. The trick is to find a balance between a timetable that might put your group under realistic pressure to complete the project and a timetable that is too spread out. You don’t want to put too much pressure on people in your group, but neither do you want to risk losing momentum and the interest and motivation of the team.

**DO**

- Check what may already be planned in the community for the same period
- Put all the activities together in one calendar, plan and check if it is realistic
- Consider time for planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation
- Plan time for regular evaluation
- Complete a work timetable for your group
- Make a checklist of objectives versus your activities
**DON’T**
- Make your project dependant on one single activity
- Over-estimate time – most likely, you will miss over-optimistic deadlines.
- Put too many activities in one single period
- Over-estimate your capacities - you also need energy and time to recover
- Stay forever at the preparation stage - you need to start implementing/doing
- Remember, the perfect plan does not exist!

**Group meetings**
Consider how often the group gets together. Is this sufficient to carry out the project or will you need to meet more often?

**Task Groups**
Task groups are a great way of getting everyone involved in the project. Look at the different tasks within the project and allocate them to different groups within your team e.g. carrying out research; gathering materials; dealing with public relations; managing the budget. Remember to feedback to the entire group during meetings.

**Planning your Budget**

And now for the ‘fun’ part! Unless you are lucky enough to have an aspiring accountant in your group, budget planning and monitoring can be challenging. However, it’s worth putting the work into it, particularly at the preparation stage. Your project needs a realistic, well thought-out budget to get funded.

Draw up a fair and realistic budget – it should be as close to the final figures as possible. Examine your list of project activities and work out what each one will cost. Have you included everything? If money seems tight, consider what other sources of funding might be available to your group, or plan fundraising activities. There needs to be a strong link between every item on your budget and your project description (lists of activities, materials you’ll need, training you’ll need and so on).

Base your costs on quotes and estimates you have researched. You will be asked to provide quotes with your application, in particular for more expensive budget items.

Provide a detailed breakdown of each budget item.

For example if you want to include training costs in your budget, you need to detail what type of training it is, how long it is for, the number of people getting trained and who will deliver the training to you.

If you budget for an item that is only marginal to your project but takes up a significant proportion of your budget, then you need to review either your programme or your budget. Look again at your planned activities and prioritise them.

Make sure to restrict any equipment costs in your budget. Remember this is a short-term, temporary project. Would leasing/renting equipment be a better-value option? (Provide evidence /quotes).
Phase 3

Implementation

At this point your project plan should be clearly mapped out and structured as described in the preparation phase. To successfully implement the project these are the areas you need to keep an eye on.

Remember to keep referring back to your original aims and objectives. Include evaluation stop points throughout the programme and adjust your programme if need be.

Participation

• A good Youth Initiative project involves all members of the team in a meaningful way at all stages
• A project with a very impressive end product which has been implemented by only one or two of the group is not considered a good Youth Initiative project
• Meaningful participation means that everyone – in their own way – has helped to move the team forward
• Finishing a project with a wonderful end product is not the most important part. Making sure everyone is actively involved in the process is much more important.

Some tips for encouraging meaningful participation:

You can arrange meetings that provide more opportunities for people to get actively involved by:
• Working in small groups and bringing results together
• Listening to each person’s ideas before jumping into a discussion
• Giving time for people to write down their ideas
• Hanging two posters on the wall: FOR and AGAINST - everyone can write down their ideas on both posters which can be used for discussion
• Trying to explore the underlying meaning of behaviour - why is someone silent all the time, why does someone always disagree?

Monitoring Finance

If you neglect the finances during your project you will create lots of headaches for your group later. Below are some useful tips you should think about:

• It is important that no one group member takes complete responsibility for the finances
• Make sure to collect all receipts and keep them in a safe place
• Develop a system for recording what you have spent against your budget
Promotion

Your project is benefiting you and your community and you are working hard at it. Spread the word and make your project visible!!

• Issue a press release to local newspapers or radio stations. Help is available if you look for it
• Does your organisation have a website/issue a newsletter? If it does, write an article on your project
• Organise meetings with the local community
• Contact local authorities to share your project
• Keep records/copies of all publicity material (remember to include it in your final report)

Phase 4

Evaluation

Evaluation is not something that people get immediately excited about. Often it is associated with “writing long reports”, “justifying your work to someone else”, “filling out forms and questionnaires”, etc. Boring, tiring, difficult: not exciting at all!

We want to show you that evaluation can be thrilling, electrifying, stimulating, fun, exciting... or at least attractive and inspiring enough to integrate it into your project! As individuals in our daily lives we evaluate all the time.

We collect information, we process it, we give it meaning and value and we act or react according to it. We do it every day when we cross the street, when we buy something, when we talk, when we work, when we move, when we cook and we do it without reports and questionnaires. We do this ‘every day evaluation’ all by ourselves and in our own way. But when we work with other people we have to agree on how, when and what we want to evaluate.

Some questions

What are you evaluating?

At what levels do you need to evaluate? e.g. evaluating the group process, individual input, organisational approach?

How often do you need to evaluate? What methods will you use to evaluate? Who will evaluate?

Some Tips

• During the Preparation phase it is important that the group agrees the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout the project phases. Raise it at every meeting!
• It is important to ensure that your tasks are completed according to your timetable, but remember to refer back to the original objectives established in the Exploration phase of the project

• Decide who will take responsibility for checking progress, assessing progress and giving feedback to the whole group

• Monitoring and evaluation should be participative – everybody should have the opportunity to give their input at different stages throughout the process

• Evaluation should be creative and active – who really wants to have to complete written questionnaires all the time?

• Have you considered involving an outside evaluator or your project Coach for some sessions? An unbiased ear is more objective

• Encourage and motivate each other throughout the project

• Don’t forget you will need to prepare a final report – a well-structured monitoring and evaluation process can make that a bit easier

• Consider your end product – is it what you thought it would be? Is it useful within your locality?

• Celebrate! Make time to look at your achievements and celebrate your success together.

Some Tools

There are many methods you can choose from to evaluate your project, both during and after your project.

Some of these include:

• Questionnaires
• Interviews
• Diaries
• Evaluation Games
• Group Activities

Here is a tool that is great for evaluating your group process:

Phase 5

Transfer

Your project has been successfully completed. Now is the time to consider your next step – putting the Transfer plan into place and exploring future projects.

So often when we finish a project, we type the report, submit it and then file away the paperwork. Wouldn’t it be amazing to share these experiences and ideas, to offer your experience as a springboard for others to learn from and to make your own experience stronger as a result?
You already thought about Transfer at the Exploration stage and now it’s time to put the plan into action.

Share your outcome

- What results have you collected throughout the project and what do you think will be worth sharing?
- Who do you want to share your project outcomes with e.g. local clubs, schools, regional organisations?
- How will you communicate the results of your project to interested groups?

Here are some suggestions:

- Complete your Youth Week 2013 feedback form - detailing all you learned from this project
- Create a ‘How to do a Sexual Health Youth Initiative’ booklet and sending it to other youth groups.
- Host a presentation and awards ceremony and invite stakeholders.

Next steps

Have you considered developing your idea further and creating a larger project?

ABC Heywire- [http://www.abc.net.au/heywire/](http://www.abc.net.au/heywire/)


Congratulations!