

# Youth Arts Projects – A Step By Step Guide

Whether you are getting together hip-hop workshops, an exhibition of urban art or a forum on contemporary music there are certain things you need to think about, decide and do. Each project is unique and will require a slightly different approach, but there are some basic steps involved in getting a youth arts project up and happening.

## 1. The Idea

Inspiration is the first and one of the most important steps in making something happen – but make sure you're not the only one who is inspired. Talk with other people about your idea. Let it build and take off in other directions. The more people who are involved at this stage, the more people who will have a deep commitment to the final project.

## 2. The Project

Time to take the idea that has evolved and develop it as a youth arts project. To create a basic project structure work through the following questions:

- **What?** What are you planning on doing. You'll need detail here. Don't stop at "some hip hop workshops". Outline what skills are going to be broken down and taught in each one. Get down your plan to have a local trainee work closely with the artist.
- **Who?** Who is your target audience or the participants? Who are the artists you are going to use? Who will provide you with support or act as partners in the project? i.e. arts agencies, youth organisations, schools, the local shire....
- **When?** When are you doing it? Dates may have to fit in with your target audience, artists, local events and funding rounds.
- **Where?** Where will it happen?
- **Why?** Why are you doing it? Have you and has everybody involved got a clear and shared understanding of the aims & objectives of the project?
- **How much?** How much will it cost? You will need to get a budget together. Make a list of all project expenses (i.e. equipment, transport, materials, coordinator wages, venue hire, artists fees) even if they may be provided through inkind support. Inkind support involves being provided with services or goods rather than money, for example, the Council providing you with free use of a venue. You still need to work out a dollar value for services or goods that may be provided through inkind support and note it with all other project expenses. The total will be the project "Expenditure." In the next stage of making your project happen you'll need to source project "Income".

A strong and clear project structure will assist you when you are telling people about and seeking support for your project.

## 3. Getting Ready

You and the people you are working with now have a project structure. It's time to start preparing for it to happen. It's crucial you consider a few key things before you go any further. It will be too late once your project is underway!

- **Tasks, timelines and responsibility** - Sort out all the things that need to be done, when they need to be done by and who will do them. It's a great idea to get this all down clearly on a spreadsheet that everybody can refer to. This document will probably need to be regularly updated as things change.
- **Documentation and evaluation** - How will you record what happens? How will you measure whether your project achieves the objectives that were set? Take a look at the information sheets on documentation and evaluation for more information.
- **Legal issues** - Are there any legal issues to consider, such as permits, licences, copyright, insurance or contracts?
- **Marketing** - How will you promote your project? Get a marketing plan together detailing all the different methods you are going to use to make people aware of your project. In doing this ask yourself who you need to make aware - project participants, sponsors, funding bodies, the general community and media.

- **Resourcing** - Where will you get the money and resources to make your project happen? Explore the options. This might include grants, corporate sponsorship, project generated income (such as ticket or product sales) or philanthropic trusts. Sourcing in-kind support from individuals, businesses, organisations or local government in relation to venues, volunteers, accommodation, catering or materials is not only a fantastic way of resourcing your project, but another way to connect people within your community to it.

Example of a plan format:

AREA	TASK	WHO	SUPPORT	WHEN
MARKETING	Put together promo flyer	Coordinator	Volunteers	By Sept 7
	Hand out flyers	Volunteer Coordinator	Volunteers	By Oct 4

## 6. Making It Happen

You've come up with the idea, developed the project, made preparations and now it's all happening... but you can't sit back just yet. Make sure you stay on the ball and

- **Look after your crew** - Are the people and partners informed about project developments, happy and motivated?
- **Keep track of spending** - Are all financial transactions being recorded? Are you sticking to the budget? If not, are you making provisions for this?
- **Keep with the timeline** - Are deadlines being met by the people who are responsible for them? Do you need to update the timeline document.
- **Documentation and evaluation** - Are you collecting material, comments and data that will allow you to create a great record of your project and work out what was and wasn't achieved?

## 7. Looking Back, Taking in the Moment and Planning What's to Come

The stalls have been packed away, the exhibition has been taken down. Time to look back on what has happened, celebrate your achievements and think about what's next.

Hold debriefing sessions with all the main people involved to reflect on how things went. Ask yourselves question like:

- what went well and why?
- what would you do differently next time?
- what obstacles did you face (lack of skills, resources, interest, etc.) and how could these be overcome?

Use this feedback, your documentation and evaluation to create a report of your project. This report will feed into any acquittals that you may need to submit to funding bodies. It will also form a base for what you and the others you have worked with will tackle next time.

Thank everybody who has been involved. Take the time to reward each other for what has been achieved. Try to hold onto that energy and momentum so that it can be channelled into more great youth arts projects.

## Where to From Here?

Other sheets from our set that might be of use include: 'Funding & Resourcing Your Arts', 'Documenting Your Arts', 'Evaluating Your Arts' and 'Youth Arts Best Practice'.

For management information, visit [www.mapnp.org/library](http://www.mapnp.org/library); for arts marketing information, visit [www.fuel4arts.com](http://www.fuel4arts.com); for information about legal issues, visit [www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au); for information about copyright, visit [www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au); general management including legal issues are well covered in -

Radbourne, Jennifer and Fraser, Margaret, *Arts Management: A Practical Guide*, Allen & Unwin, Australia, 1996.



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