

Activity 4.26 Creative Approaches to Planning Social Action (The Arts)

Module: 4. Planning Social Action

Duration: 5 minutes

Social Development Themes: Arts

Summary

As has been well documented throughout Module 4 in the standard toolkit, there are a number of different approaches to project planning, some more creative than others but all offering useful insights into how we move from 'dreaming' to 'doing'.

When it comes to the nuts and bolts of project planning, even when delivering an arts-based approach to Active Citizens, facilitators will probably want to draw more heavily on the exercises in Module 4 of the standard toolkit. It's important for groups to give sufficient time and energy to thinking about the logistical side of the project planning of their social action. Plans still need to be made and documented around monitoring and evaluation, risk and what success looks like. Timelines need to be written down and roles and responsibilities still need to be understood and communicated effectively...

Learning Outcomes:

Skills in project planning and management – problem identification and analysis

Approach:

The group could design and deliver their own mini social action project in small groups, in a short space of time. Encourage small groups to come up with videos or presentations, no longer than one minute, about an issue in their own community and what they think could be done to address it. Or, it could simply be about raising awareness – either way it should be a call to action. They could present it live or record on their mobile phones.

The group have two hours to identify the issue, then rehearse and film what they want to say. They need to think about who their audience might be, for example, they could pretend they're presenting it to 'the mayor' or a local government representative. If they film it, they could upload it to social media and see how many likes the team gets.

The idea is that, through the process of working in small teams on this activity, they are able to explore what it will take to work together moving forward on their respective SAPs. They can choose how they create the campaign but they need to think about roles within the team, audience, key messages, objectives, timescale. In the debrief, the process can be unpicked in more detail.

Alternate Approach:

Work in small groups to create something for the final evening's celebration – this could be a short piece of theatre, a song or a piece of spoken word. It needs to be creative and build on some of the skills/experiences they've had over the week and it also needs to have a social driver – an opportunity for the group to dip their toe into the world of arts and social change. Examples include UK poets and spoken word artists like Akala/Dizraeli/Kate Tempest or some Cardboard Citizens work <http://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/>

What is an effective way of communicating a message through the arts? How do we genuinely engage our audiences and encourage them to participate? How do we use our time in front of an audience effectively? What do we want our audience to leave with? What are the questions we want to ask through the work we're doing? How do we amplify our message?

Approach 3

Work in small groups to design a hypothetical arts festival that looks at a particular issue in the community. What are the things they need to think about? What is the objective? What is the programme? The group needs to think about not only what they're doing but also 'how' they're doing it. What are the roles and responsibilities? Again, this is an experiential way of looking at project planning and thinking about Social Action.

[Here could be a brief description of a few key organisations that are using the arts as a tool for social change globally – Barefeet in Zambia, AfroReggae in Brazil, Greaea in the UK, Cardboard Citizens, Jack Drum Arts, People’s Palace Project – also use examples of within AC of projects/organisations using the arts.]

It is important to bring in real examples of this to help participants in the exercise and also, if they’re thinking about using the arts in their own SAPs, what might the challenges be? The groups then have 5 minutes to present their ideas to a representative from the local council (one of the facilitators or an external) who will commission one of the groups.

Debrief:

It’s important for the groups to spend time after each activity reflecting on the experience, as this is where learning happens. What went well? What were the challenges? What can we take from the activity to strengthen the planning for our genuine SAPs? What might it tell us about how groups work, or our own style of leadership etc?