

Young people's involvement in the development of a Halloween Programme in Lava Javas Youth Café, Limerick City

Limerick Youth Service

1. How the topic was identified

- Lava Javas is a youth café in Limerick city centre for young people aged between 14 and 19.
- The Lava Javas Youth Committee consists of eight young people who come together weekly to discuss current issues of interest, as advocates for the young people in the Lava Javas youth café. This committee consists of five girls and three boys aged between 15 and 19. These young people attend various schools and are from different areas in Limerick.
- The Youth Committee decided that it would be great to have an event on Halloween for the young people of Lava Javas youth café to allow them to hang out in a safe, friendly, drug- and alcohol-free space. They also felt it would be a good opportunity to use this event as a 're-opening' for Lava Javas as a new youth worker was now running the project, and had re-opened the café fully. It was hoped that more young people would start to attend the café on a more consistent basis as a result of this event, by showing what it can offer young people, and advertising it online.
- They decided to get the opinions of a wider group of young people by consulting them on what the Halloween event should be like.
- On 23 October 2019, the Youth Committee members developed draft consultation questions and piloted the method and questions as a group. Following the pilot, they made some changes to the method and questions. The revised method and questions were used to consult with a broader group of young people who use the youth café.
 - » Topic: Halloween in Lava Javas – Have your say.
 - » Questions:
 1. What Halloween activities would you like to see at the Lava Javas Halloween party?
 2. In your opinion, what is the best time of the day to hold the Halloween party?
- On 25 October 2019, 55 young people were consulted on the topic 'Halloween in Lava Javas – Have your say' during the night of the youth café. These young people were between 14 and 19 years old and came to the café from all over Limerick City and County, with a small number from Clare and Cork. The young people were from various demographics and identified as male, female and non-binary.

2. The young people's participation in the decision-making

- The audience (decision-makers) for this consultation and event were the youth workers and the young people on the committee, who were highly involved in the consultation process. These decision-makers took every young person's opinion and ideas seriously.
- The committee members drew up an event plan, which included as many ideas as possible from the consultation.

3. How the views of young people were sought, and how they affected the decisions

SPACE

- The Lava Javas youth café is run by young people for young people.
- The young people from the committee were involved from the very start and helped to determine the topic and questions.
- The involvement of the committee was sustained throughout, from running the broader consultation with 55 young people to using the findings of the consultation to design the Halloween event.
- The young people on the committee, and those who attended the consultation, were interested in the issue because it directly affected them. They were all able to identify how they wanted the event to be run.
- The process was very inclusive.
- The members of the café felt safe to give their opinions because they were in a comfortable and familiar environment.
- Each committee member ensured everyone wrote their opinions on the walls. They supported the young people if they needed help with spelling, and they gave them lots of space and time to write.

VOICE

- On 25 October 2019, the committee held a consultation with 55 young café users, using an open-space approach to capture the views of the constant flow of young people coming in and out throughout the evening.
- Two flipchart sheets were hung on the wall with the consultation questions:
- What Halloween activities would you like to see at the Lava Javas Halloween party?
- In your opinion, what is the best time of the day to hold the Halloween party?
- Young people were invited to write their ideas on Post-its throughout the night, this anonymised the ideas.
- The questions allowed young people to write whatever ideas they wished.
- Near the end of the evening, the committee members categorised the Post-its and left the categories on the wall so that the café members could see everyone's ideas clearly. This ensured that each young person in the café knew their opinions had influenced the categories.
- An evaluation form, the 'my opinion' evaluation method, was used in order to gauge how the young people found the open-space Halloween consultation.

AUDIENCE

- The decision-makers for this event were the youth worker and the youth committee.
- The young people giving their views on the Halloween event knew who wanted their views and why they wanted them.
- The decision-makers promised to take every young person's opinions and ideas seriously.
- Following the broader consultation with the 55 young people, the youth committee members discussed the feasibility of the suggestions provided at the consultation in the Lava Javas youth café.

continued

- Each category was looked at and the committee members made a plan to ensure that the Halloween event included as many ideas and opinions as possible. They decided that the ideas that could not be included in the Halloween event would be used for future events or activities in Lava Javas.
- All young café users were informed about the time of the event and the activities to be included before Halloween.

INFLUENCE

- When the young people were asked to give their opinions, they were informed that the event would be held in Lava Javas youth café, which allowed them to make suggestions that might work in the space.
- The evaluation, which was filled out at the end of the consultation, captured how the young people felt about being involved and listened to.
- The views of the young people were written up the night the consultation took place.
- All their ideas were given proper consideration.
- An event timetable was written up that listed all the activities. This ensured that the young people knew exactly what happened in response to their ideas from the consultation.
- The committee members explained to the young people who were consulted why some of their ideas were not included in the event and what would happen to those ideas. Several of these ideas were used at events in the weeks after Halloween (e.g. a Christmas movie night, decoration of Christmas cupcakes and decoration of Valentine's Day cupcakes).

Below are the findings from the consultation. The text highlighted in yellow are the activities that the youth committee decided would be feasible. The event was from 3pm to 7pm, the time chosen by the majority of those consulted.

Key Findings- Consultation

Q1: What Halloween Activities would you like to see at the Lava Javas Halloween party?

• Face Painting (x 14)	• BAKING - Decorating Halloween Cupcakes
• Table quiz (x7)	• MUSIC - Karaoke, Live, Make a Halloween music playlist.
• FOOD- Barm Brack, Sweets and coke	• Special FX makeup
• ART - Create your own masks (x2)	• MOVIES- x13 (Hocus pocus x1)
• Fancy Dress/ costume contest (x11)	• XBOX- Fifa Tournament
• HALLOWEEN GAMES - Bobbing for Apples (x 7), Hanging apple from ceiling (x2), Grape and Flour game (x3)	• Halloween decorations
• Hide and seek	

Q2: In your opinion, what is the best time of the day to hold the Halloween party?

- 50% of young people said that a 3pm start would be perfect.
- 40% said between 4 and 7 pm
- 5% said 2pm start
- 5% said 8pm finish

➤ From this, it was decided that 3pm to 7pm caters for the majority of the young people.

4. Lessons learned

- A different consultation method could be chosen to see if it goes as well as this one.
- The questions could be presented on a bigger piece of paper so that people could read them more easily.
- The young people didn't mind answering the open question at the end. Next time, a second question could be added to ensure they have enough space to give their opinions on the consultation.