

Review of innovation and good practice: Planning Template

Case study template for a project or initiative that involved children and/or young people (CYP) in decision-making

Please write your case study as a story.

1. Project information

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
Name of project or initiative?	DES Creative Youth TAP Creative Clusters Creative Associates
Contact person	Susan O’Keeffe (Susanokeefe123@gmail.com) 0860829355
On what aspect of the work of your organisation, the work of another organisation or a local/national issue were you looking for their views?	Education
Why you consulted/engaged with CYP?	To give children a voice in decision making on the creative activities they would like in two schools that were part of a Creative Cluster.
Setting in which you engage with children/YP (e.g. school, youthclub, residential care, hospital ward etc)	Two primary schools that were part of a Creative Cluster.
Who were the children/young people (e.g. pupils, young people in care, young people involved in youth service etc)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All CYP ● CYP in disadvantaged areas/poverty ● CYP from ethnic minorities ● CYP with disabilities ● CYP from traveller community ● Children attending primary schools ● Migrant CYP ● CYP with learning disabilities ● CYP with physical or sensory disabilities ● LGBTI+ CYP ● Refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors ● CYP who have been bereaved
Who facilitated the consultation with the children/young person? (Role of the person e.g. teacher, social worker, youth worker, external facilitator etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creative Cluster Facilitator (specialising in child participation methods) ● Teachers
Who acted on their views? (role of the decision makers)	Teachers and principals
Were CYP involved in the design of the consultation (e.g. was a youth advisory group established or consulted to codesign the methodology/questions or to pilot the methodology?)	Each school set up an advisory group of children who worked with the Creative Cluster Facilitator before and during the process. The advisory groups collaborated with the facilitator on the idea of conducting classroom consultations and votes and a whole school vote.

2. Giving space, voice, audience and influence to children and young people

SPACE


Tell the story of the space or setting in which you sought the views of children or young people, and include any relevant information on the questions below:

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
How were CYP made to feel safe to express their views?	In advance of consulting with children, the Creative Cluster Facilitator conducted workshops with teachers and principals from the two schools to enhance their knowledge and understanding of pupil voice and to coach them in approaches to giving children a voice in the Creative Cluster projects. Teachers were supported to understand a 'let it go' approach, which is a process of the letting go of their own ideas and controlling decision-making and giving power to children to make decisions. The facilitator suggested that teachers use their first name as a way of restructuring classroom dynamics and relationships. This workshop resulted in teachers enabling children to freely share their ideas in the school spaces. Teachers in the two schools collaborated and adapted their approaches based on suggestions and ideas from each other.
How early in the process were they involved in the decision making?	Children in both schools were given a voice in decision-making from the start of the process.
How did you involve those directly affected by the topic e.g. how did you recruit/select participants?	All children in both schools were involved through individual classroom consultations and a whole school vote.
How did you make the process inclusive and accessible?	All children in both schools were involved through individual classroom consultations and a whole school vote.
How did you continue to involve CYP throughout the decision-making process?	After a vote of the entire school in both schools, the children were given the chance to pick what they would do at different times during the year (Christmas, Halloween etc) on the overall themes of cooking or baking. Individual classes were facilitated to pick their own activities.

VOICE

Tell the story of how you gave CYP a voice in decision-making, and include any relevant information on the questions below:

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
How did you inform them about the topics on which you wanted their views?	Children in each class were asked what creative activities they wanted in the school as part of the Creative Cluster programme.
How did you inform them about level of influence they could have on decision-making?	The children were told that their views would be acted upon unless there were particular reasons that this could not happen, such as being unsafe, beyond the budget or other.
How were CYP supported children to give their views and be heard? (What methods were used to get their views?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The methods used in individual classes depended on the age and understanding of the children. In junior classes, children were provided with objects to share their thoughts as an initial introduction. The children used lego, drawing, pictures and other activities to give their views and teachers wrote down their ideas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In senior classes, children brainstormed their ideas on the creative activities they would like and discussed the activities that would work well in the school. ● All classes voted on their ideas and a list of the top 5 ideas from each class was developed. ● The top idea (one with the most votes) from each class was put on the school noticeboard and every child in the school voted from this list. <p>Below are some images of the class ideas that were put to a whole school vote:</p> 
How were CYP supported to raise things that matter to them?	Children were told that they could suggest any creative activities they wanted.
What topics/issues did they raise?	<p>The results of the school votes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One school picked cooking ● The second school picked baking and art

AUDIENCE

Tell the story of how you made sure that there was an audience (decision-makers) for their views and include any relevant information on the questions below:

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
How did you involve the decision-makers who are responsible for influencing change (other than yourself)? (please provide details)	The teachers and principals were involved from the start in the coaching workshops conducted by the Creative Cluster Facilitator and committed to taking the views of children seriously.
How did you (and/or other decision-makers) show your commitment to listening to, and acting on children and young people's views? (please provide details)	Teachers explained to children that they were fully committed to hearing children's opinions about the creative activities they would like in the two schools. Both the individual classroom votes and the vote of the whole school showed the children how much their views would influence the final decision.
How did you develop a report or record of their views? (please provide details)	The schools announced the results of the vote on the noticeboard.

How did you check back with the CYP that their views were accurately represented? (please provide details)	The Creative Cluster Facilitator held sessions with the advisory groups in both schools and checked with them the extent to which they felt the views of children were really heard, taken seriously and acted on.
How did you involve them communicating their views to the decision makers? (please provide details)	The teachers (decision-makers) conducted the classroom consultations and class vote with children.

INFLUENCE

Tell the story of the influence of their views and include any relevant information on the questions below:

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
How did CYP know the level of influence they can have (including any limitations)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were informed from the start that their views would strongly influence the final decision made on the creative activities to be undertaken in each school. • Children's view on the specific activities they wanted throughout the school year were acted on most of the time. • Sometimes choice was limited by donations of food from local shops, but other times the children got to pick from scratch what ingredients they wanted.
How were CYP's views acted on by the appropriate decision-makers (what happened to their views)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both schools held a democratic vote on what the children would like to do in the project. Teachers led brainstorming in the classrooms and selected images for pupils to choose from. Aistear activities were set up for the younger classes to get the pupils views. Activities such as drawing what they would like to do in the school, use lego to build something that they would like to see in the school, sorting of pictures in relation to what they do in the school, what they would like to do more of and what they never do and finally what they would not like to do. The older classes took part in discussion groups, considering and sorting images, and debating their preferences. • Each class voted on their ideas and their top ideas were put to a vote of the whole school. In one of the schools, each class designed a poster to promote the idea that won the most votes. The posters with the top idea of each class were posted on the corridor notice board and each class voted on the options. The final vote in this school was for 'baking'. In the other school the top idea of each class was put to a vote of the whole school and the final vote was for 'cooking'. • The decisions made following the school vote were presented to the principal and Board of Management in each school. • In the school that picked cooking, an entire kitchen was donated to the school, as one of their parents worked in a kitchen showroom. This school's task was to gather utensils, cutlery and delf for which they sought the help of parents. • Children continued to have voice on what they baked and cooked in the two schools throughout the year. Limitations regarding budget, health and safety and allergies were explained to the children.

How did you give CYP feedback or updates on the development of the service, policy, plan or project on which they gave their views? (please provide details)	Once the schools had started doing activities on their creative theme (from the school vote), each class was regularly asked throughout the year what specific activities they wanted at different important milestones, such as Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc.
How were CYP given age-appropriate feedback explaining how their views were used and the reasons for decisions taken?	Class teachers gave feedback to children about how their ideas were being used and the reasons for decisions taken.
How did you explain the reasons for decisions taken? (please provide details)	The majority of ideas that children suggested were acted on. However, discussions were held with children with about the consequences of acting on ideas that were unsafe, outside the budget or unrealistic.
How were they enabled to evaluate the process throughout?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupil interviews were conducted in both schools on two occasions. The first interviews took place pre-Christmas with five pupils chosen at random from all classes in the school, ensuring a gender and age mix. ● The second interviews took place in both schools in May with the same children to get their views on the effectiveness of the project throughout the school year.

3. The learning for your organisation or project

Questions	Response (based on survey response)
What has been the key learning for your organisation on the process (of consulting with CYP)? (What worked well? Anything you would change?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letting it go... handing over decision-making control to children. ● Learning how resourceful children are. ● Getting an understanding of the difference between children being offered choices from a list developed by teachers and being given a meaningful voice from the start of an initiative. ● Learning skills to obtain voice.
What was the key learning for your organisation on the outcomes from the consultation/engagement (of consulting with CYP) (i.e. the end result – how the CYP's views informed the plans for the policy, service, project etc)? (What worked well? Anything you would change?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The workshops for teachers and principals in a neutral ground (hotel) worked well as they felt they could share practice and support each other in a relaxed environment. ● The Creative Cluster Facilitator was obliged to conduct the final sessions with teachers and principals in a teachers' centre and felt it didn't work as well as in the hotel. ● The Creative Cluster Facilitator believes that the application form for schools needs redesign. At the point of completing the form (before the start of the school year) many teachers don't yet have the skills to obtain children's voice. In addition, the form asks for their own (teacher or principal) view on what creative activities will be done in the school, which is completely premature as they have not yet had the chance to get the views of children on this.
Finally, what were the benefits of involving children and young people in planning of policy, services or programmes?	Children had ownership of the creative activities done in the two schools and were enthusiastic and excited about what they were doing.

Links to any reports etc. Please add hyperlink to any relevant reports or websites etc.