

...how do we get started?

the first of many questions...



why do we want to do an exchange? *where's the idea coming from?* how can we explore the idea further? **what other youth groups have done exchanges?** **how can we find out more information?** how long will it take to arrange? *what do we want to get out of an exchange?* what country do we want to visit and why? *how do we find a partner group?* what issues or themes interest us? *what are our aims and objectives?* **what do we hope to learn?** **who will host first and when?** what are our partners' needs and wishes? **what joint activities and project work will make up our programme?** *who's going to be in our group?* how will we recruit and select them? *how many participants?* **how many leaders?** what's the gender balance? *what's expected of everyone?* how will we organise our group? *what are the key task areas?* how will we create a plan? *how will we work together?* **who will make decisions and how?** *what ways of working do we enjoy best?* what training do we need? how will we prepare together? *how many residentials will we hold?* how can we learn more about our partners? *how will we communicate?* **how much will the exchange cost?** how will we raise the money? *when should we apply to CYEC?* how will we look after group funds? *what additional help can CYEC give us?* how can we get publicity? **how do we travel there?** *when's the best time of year to travel?* what jobs do we need? *what do parents need to know?* **how do we get management approval?** *how do we do risk assessments?* how will we record our progress? *how will we keep up our momentum?* **how can we involve our community?** how will we share our learning back home?

CYEC's Handbook '**Contact**' will help provide some of the answers.

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...we've got our passports, so when do we leave?

here are 8 steps to getting started...



- 1 As a group explore the idea of an exchange further**
- 2 Check out CYEC's funding criteria**
- 3 Decide on an overseas country**
- 4 Find a partner group and get to know them**
- 5 Establish your own group and team build**
- 6 Map out the key planning stages and task areas for your group**
- 7 Start fundraising**
- 8 Get down to the real nitty gritty of planning and organisation**

You need to start your planning early - long distance exchanges are big projects so they need to be planned well in advance. CYEC recommends that you allow at least 18 months lead-in for the various stages of planning and preparation so that everyone participates fully and gets the most out of the experience.

You will also need to allow enough time for your fundraising campaign.

Overleaf you will find a series of questions that will help you clarify your ideas and make some decisions.

Early on you'll need to think carefully about

- who's going to be involved in the project - group recruitment
- why you want to do the exchange and what you hope to learn – your objectives
- the theme or youth issues you want to explore internationally
- how everyone will work together and make decisions
- the likely approximate costs - the budget

Before proceeding too far, check out you have the backing of your management committee – get the green light.

Then your group could decide to divide out some of the key task areas such as

- fundraising
- publicity and public relations
- travel arrangements
- programme arrangements
- learning about your partners
- learning about yourselves – and finding out if you can live together

Remember that there are publications, resources and training courses you can obtain from CYEC. The Handbook '**Contact**' will be especially helpful.

This pack also includes some taster activities to help get things started. You can get further advice from CYEC, including having a meeting with one of our Regional Representatives or a member of staff. CYEC can also put you in contact with other groups who have experience of exchanges.

You will also want to apply to CYEC for a grant. Each autumn CYEC accepts applications for youth exchange grants. More information on funding and criteria is provided in this pack.

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...why does it take so long?

it's an experience, not a holiday...



Possible Flow Chart for Planning a Long Distance Youth Exchange

- 24 - 18 Months** Consult young people establish interest
Explore initial idea: Who? Where? Why? When?
Take advice, do research → **Contact CYEC/meet with CYEC**
Gain permission/support in principle from management body
Seek a link and identify a partner youth group
Set out initial objectives
- 18 - 12 Months** Recruit and form your group
Communicate regularly with partners
Refine aims and objectives together and agree the Theme
Draw up a Budget; plan Fundraising
Create Project Plan: agree group roles, tasks & working methods
Plan PR activities – launch project locally
Discuss outline programme/activities & agree dates
Initial Risk assess/gain management green light
- 12 - 9 Months** Make grant applications → **Apply to CYEC**
Map out group preparation & training programme
Plan Record of Achievement process
Do more Fundraising & PR activities
Liaison with parents
- 9 - 6 Months** Hold regular group meetings
Make Advance Planning Visit; risk assess all activities and venues
Hold residential training weekend(s)
Continue Fundraising & PR
Refine programme arrangements/activities
Hold briefing meetings with parents
Pay insurance-protected travel deposits
- 6 - 3 Months** Finalise programme arrangements
Check travel documents – passports and visas
More preparation/fundraising
Health preparation
- 3 - 1 Month** Finalise financial arrangements/money transfers
Detailed health briefings
Final preparation

NB:
Whilst the cycle covers the main issues, there will always be aspects of organisation peculiar to each exchange. It is important to keep in regular touch with your overseas partner and to hold regular meetings with your group.

Visit Takes Place →

Liaison with partners for 2nd Leg
Evaluation and follow-up activities
Report and dissemination activities

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Action Planning Chart



What Key Task needs doing?	How? (the action steps)	By whom?	By when?	Resources needed?
Eg. air fare research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visit local travel agent research via internet 	Jon & Anika	next meeting	access to internet; a free afternoon

Signed: _____ Date: _____

As a group, brainstorm the key task areas and start to prioritise them by plotting them in the grid above. Then plan the action steps needed to achieve the task (the how) and allocate responsibility to team members. Set a deadline date for reporting back to the group on progress and identify what resources (time, money, materials, people) are going to be needed to achieve the task.

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