

...what is CYEC's youth exchange model?

here's a checklist of points to consider...



CYEC promotes a youth work model of youth exchange.

Check these key features against your exchange plans:

- it's a youth group activity for 15-25 year olds – managed and delivered by organisations and young people locally**
- it has a clear educational purpose: to provide a structured, inter-cultural learning experience for young people's personal, social and political education**
- it's delivered as a youth work project – and young people take part voluntarily and in their own time (informal education)**
- it encourages the greatest possible active participation of young people in the planning, organising and evaluation of their exchange – youth participation and learning by doing**
- it's reciprocal (two-way) with the same groups of young people involved in both countries – the hosting experience is every bit as important as visiting overseas**
- the programme is thematic and project centred with joint activities that are relevant to both groups and take account of their interests and abilities**
- it's progressive and young people are encouraged to record their development of new skills and achievements**

A long distance Commonwealth youth exchange is a demanding youth work project – but youth workers frequently tell CYEC it's the most professionally rewarding piece of youth work they've ever undertaken.

But if you are new to exchange work you may wish to consider undertaking an exchange within the UK or with a European country first to help you gain the necessary skills and experience.

You can contact Connect Youth, based at the British Council, to explore European exchange work.

T: 0207 389 4030; E: [connectyouth.enquiries@britishcouncil.org](mailto:connectyouth.enquiries@britishcouncil.org);

W: [www.britishcouncil.org/education/connectyouth](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/connectyouth)

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...so, what's in a youth exchange?

a chance to explore yourself and your world...

CYEC

**Are you finding your line manager or colleagues aren't convinced about the value of international youth exchange work?**

**Here are some ideas to help win the argument!**

Committed internationalists in the youth service and schools will be able to tell you with great clarity about the benefits of youth exchanges. They will talk about the work needing to be meticulously planned. They will explain that the primary methodology is a participative style. They will be passionate about the concept of thinking globally but acting locally; and they will talk about exchange programmes that challenge and stimulate young people and celebrate diversity.

In personal terms, youth workers will talk of the noticeable and quantifiable change in young people's self-confidence and self-esteem during the exchange project. They will recall the many curriculum issues addressed through tackling and preparing for the exchange. They will relate experiences about the fun and enjoyment of the exchange itself and they will often describe the fundamental change in the perspectives of young people when they return from an exchange to the community in which they reside.

What can often be overlooked is the value youth exchanges can also bring to organisations. If managed and delivered well, youth exchanges can become, by their nature, high profile within the community. Youth exchanges can enthuse and motivate others, they can provide clear and tangible case histories on how to work effectively with young people and, as importantly, can improve the residential expertise within the staff or volunteer organisational team.

So, **'What's in a Youth Exchange?'** Well, seen through the eyes of the many supporters of CYEC's work, an enormous amount. All those with a love of youth exchanges know that international work is strongly and rightly placed within the heart of the youth service curriculum. That well managed and delivered, it provides good models, both for developmental group work and one-to-one work. Managed and marketed well, it can provide kudos and credibility to the organisation delivering the work. But most importantly of all, that young people can have the opportunity to be involved in an activity which is highly participative, hugely enjoyable, vastly rewarding and can provide superb learning opportunities.

In the words of a participant,

***'It's a fundamental way for young people to learn about themselves, the world they live in, and how to work together to change it.'***

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This is from an article by Chris Davis, Vice Chair of CYEC and Deputy Head of Gloucestershire Youth Service, which appeared in Young People Now, published by the National Youth Agency

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