



Lessons from history

Activity ideas using events from UK Youth's history to think about youth work and young people today.

Use these events from the past to start people thinking about the present. You can simply discuss the events or you might want to use an Agree/Disagree activity as a starting point – a 'contentious statement' has been provided to help this.

Agree/Disagree

Ask the participants to stand up. Explain that there is an imaginary line running across the room from one wall to the opposite wall. Choose one wall to represent the "totally agree" end of the line, with the opposite end representing the "totally disagree" end.

Explain that you will read out a number of contentious statements about youth work and young people; for each statement group members must choose somewhere to stand along the line, according to how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement.

Read out one of the statements, and ask people to choose where they wish to stand. When people have chosen their position, ask for comments firstly from those who agree with the statement and then from those who disagree. Repeat this with as many statements as you have time for.

Some contentious

Youth groups nowadays are places for leisure, not for education.

In 1924, The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust supported the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs to award grants to clubs to help them build club libraries. The aim was to encourage Girls' Clubs to be places of education.

In practice, people with disabilities are still excluded from most general youth activities.

As long ago as 1968, the organisation – then known as UK Youth – appointed an organiser for work with young disabled and non-disabled people together.

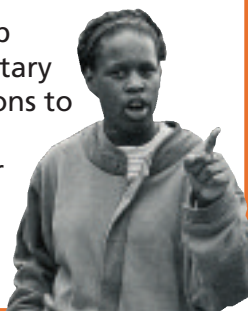


statements

Here are some statements about youth work and young people, based on events from UK Youth's history....have times changed?

Youth groups should be run by local community groups, not local authorities.

In 1939, just before World War II, the government sent out guidance that encouraged Local Education Authorities to work in partnership with voluntary organisations to provide services for young people.



Youth groups can run themselves – we don't really need adult leaders.

In 1955, the training of adults to work with young people was a high priority. The King George VI Foundation made grants available through the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs specifically for the training of youth leaders.

Clubs that are just for girls would be a good idea today.

In 1944, having been set up exclusively for girls and young women, the organisation changed its name to the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs.



Race and racism aren't really issues any more.

In 1973 there was a lot of concern about racial tension and The Department of Education and Science provided funds for an investigation into successful youth work methods in 'multi-racial settings'.

Youth workers don't have much to offer young people who are out of work.

In 1982, at a time when youth unemployment was increasing sharply, the National Association of Youth Clubs believed that youth workers had a lot to offer young people during the day – not just a place to go in the evening. It set up the Dayspace Project to provide daytime youth work opportunities for young unemployed people.

Young people need 'pieces of paper' to show employers what they can do.

In 1996, Youth Clubs UK (as the organisation was then known) began its commitment to creating opportunities for young people to gain recognition for their learning in informal settings. At the "Enabling and Accrediting Young People's Achievement" Conference, the Youth Achievement Awards were launched.

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