



FUTURE PROOF  
**PARKS**



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**Working with other Youth Organisations**

AN INTRODUCTION



Working with other  
Youth-Facing Organisations:  
A How-To Guide





## About Future Proof Parks

Future Proof Parks is a programme run in a partnership between **Groundwork, Fields in Trust** and **National Youth Agency**. This National Lottery Heritage Funded programme – part of the £10m 'Kick the Dust' initiative – aims to get more young people interested and involved in preserving their local park and greenspace heritage.

As a result of the programme young people across the UK will learn more about their local historic park heritage and be encouraged to join their local 'friends of' park groups and volunteer to preserve the local spaces that matter to the communities they live in.

The project is also working with 'friends of' park groups to give them the tools, encouragement, and support to get more local young people involved in their work and to see the benefits of cross-generational working.

## Working with other Youth-Facing Organisations: A How-To Guide

Connecting with partners is as important as working directly with young people. The benefits of collaborating for local organisations include access to a young audience and understanding how they use various services; networking opportunities; have your agenda heard within other organisations; access to a wider range of funding streams.

Organisations already working with young people are likely to be resource constrained in some way, but all will share a passion of wanting to create opportunities for the young people they serve. If you can show that your organisation has some skills to offer and you understand the basics of working with young people, then these organisations will be assured that working with you will lead to increased capacity for them as well as benefiting young people.

Different youth facing organisations – schools, youth clubs, local authorities, local public bodies, and charity organisations – will have different priorities, approaches and levels of experience of working with young people. It is important to engage partners at an early stage of project development, as this is likely to improve the level of influence and empowerment experienced by young people.

This guide provides you with insight into different youth-facing organisations, which will enable you to: approach organisations in different ways; plan an engaging session to deliver with another organisation. Any questions, please get in touch: [communities@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:communities@groundwork.org.uk)

### Types of Youth-Facing Organisations

#### Local Councils

Local Councils are responsible for a broad range of public services, although direct experience with young people varies significantly. When resources for Local Councils become scarce, statutory services often becomes a priority over more community services such as parks and youth clubs. Still, there will be a wide range of skilled staff in Local Councils, who may have useful information for you.

You can find about services for young people, communities and the local environment on your Local Council website. You may also find a directory of schools, youth clubs, public meetings/forums, and committees related to community events and outreach.

Find the relevant contact for various departments and ask:

- What environmental initiatives are taking place?
- What youth participation initiatives are taking place that your organisation could help with?
- Are there any schools they know are working on community projects?
- Do they advertise voluntary work experience for young people not in education or employment?

Local Councils are usually quite large, complex organisations to navigate. However, there may be a role for your organisation in providing a service to the Council, especially in consulting the wider community.

### **Schools & Colleges**

Research your local schools, finding out what initiatives they encourage their students to get involved in – Eco-Schools, Young Enterprise, Youth Parliament, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Work Experience. Some schools and colleges set aside enrichment time for students to take up extra-curricular activities and many hold community outreach days that your group can take part in.

If you cannot find the information on their website, you can telephone the school receptionist to find out which teacher is responsible for various subjects, extra-curricular activities or specific age groups. If you cannot get through to a receptionist, then write to the Head of Year for the age group you wish to talk to. Heads of Year are often also PSHE and citizenship coordinators.

Be prepared when putting together your pitch or literature together on why your organisation wants to include young people. Teachers will want to see that you have made a link to the curriculum or extra-curricular activity and that you can offer subject knowledge relevant to the students.

**View the national curriculum online:** [www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum)

When phoning a school, it's best to call during lunch time or after 3.30pm. Alternatively ask the receptionist if the teacher you are trying to contact has a free period and whether a meeting in person would be more convenient for your contact. Try to approach the school within two weeks of each term starting, so that teachers can factor your activity into their planning.

Things to look out for when working with schools:

- You may want to note the Ofsted rating of a school – if they are a rating level four (i.e., inadequate) it is unlikely they have capacity to work with community organisations.
- Avoid exam times for students (often January, late May and early June). December is also an inconvenient month, as schools are often gearing up for Christmas or mock exams.
- Letters or emails arriving at a school on a Monday, or a Friday are less likely to receive attention – try mid-week to make contact, and keep trying until you get through!

### **Youth Clubs**

Youth clubs provide a more informal and relaxed atmosphere than schools and offer a place of belonging for young people. Relationships are at the heart of youth clubs - both with friends and the adults who work there – so it is usually effective to shadow youth workers and build a presence with young people before leading your own session.

Youth workers are interested in providing stimulating activities for young people that enhance social and communication skills, help young people to play a role in their community, and develop a sense of empowerment. Your activities could involve listening to the concerns of young people, sharing your own experiences, as well as any creative activities you can bring to the table!

Find the contact details for your local youth clubs either by doing an internet search or by contacting your Local Councils to ask if they have list of youth club contacts. Youth workers' shift patterns range from sometime after school (3pm) to late evening (9pm), with limited desk time back at the office. Therefore, you will need to be patient until you receive a response.

Alternatively, you can try going to events being held at a youth club to introduce your organisation directly, as these are likely to be run by the same organisation.

There are also a range of uniform youth organisations, such as Scouts, Girl Guiding, Woodcraft Folk and Military Cadets, you can approach with a mixture of a skills-based curriculum, classroom-like discipline and the informal setting of a community centre. You can approach them with an offer of activities structured similar to their own and ask whether this can be linked to their community-based awards or activities!

### **Universities and Student Unions**

You can also approach Universities and Students' Unions near to your organisation, if applicable. Staff within both academic departments and the Students' Unions will be charged with student development opportunities covering volunteering, social action projects, project placements (linked to the curriculum), student fundraising, and community outreach. Student-led 'Society' groups may also wish to reach out directly to community groups.

Start with the Students' Union Volunteering Department – get your volunteering opportunity advertised online and the contact for the dedicated staff member linked to student volunteers and societies. Ask the staff member about taking part in events, such as Volunteering Fairs, 'Give it a Go' activities, Volunteering Week and Go Green Week, offering talks or volunteer activities. You can also ask if they know any relevant academic staff who organise outreach activities, in Environmental Sciences for example.

Attend University lectures open to the public on relevant topics, as these are often organised by either students or relevant outreach staff (or both) – perhaps someone in your group could offer a lecture or simply use the opportunity to network.

### **National Youth Charities**

Finally, there are range of national youth charity organisations working in regions across the UK – National Youth Agency, UK Youth, British Youth Council – who can provide support with youth engagement and may be running initiatives with young people in your area.

One notable national government-backed initiative is the National Citizens Service (NCS), which engages 16–17-year-olds in an intensive programme around youth social action. The programme is structured tightly around the school timetable and involves a volunteering and fundraising activity with a community organisation. This NCS initiative seeks out local delivery partners each year, so you can enquire about becoming a local partner for some or all elements of the programme.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is another skills-based initiative providing a structured programme for 14–25-year-olds to explore the outdoors and participate in voluntary work, with different commitment levels across the bronze, silver and gold awards. Again, you can approach your local Duke of Edinburgh contact to see which organisations are running the initiative at a local level and enquire about becoming a delivery partner for voluntary elements of the programme.

### **Session Planning**

Once you have had initial meetings with partners and agreed what you will work on together, you will need to plan and deliver a well-rehearsed session with young people. It is usually best to provide all the resources required for the session. Whilst schools/youth clubs may have some stationary, you would not want to be without something that could make the activity run more smoothly!

Make sure you know the basics of Safeguarding and have agreed that supervision and active involvement of the teacher/youth worker/project worker will take place during the whole session!

For each task you plan try to keep it to 20 minutes maximum, include a variety of learning styles within the same task (i.e. visual props, opportunities to discuss in pairs, and to write down individual ideas), and think of ways to alter the activity for difficulty (allowing for different abilities and / or the possibility that people have done the activity before!).

Ultimately, it is a big leap to actually deliver your session if you have not done this before. Don't worry if some elements don't go well - try to keep the session moving, it is fine to work from your plan, and remember practice makes perfect!



## Session Plan Template

Use the session plan template below to plan a session for young people – adding alternative activities or outcomes you want to achieve!

Session Title/Topic: e.g., Team building & Social Enterprise			
Number of people:		Ability/Age Range:	
Location:		Total Time:	
<p><b>Objectives:</b>            Encourage team building skills amongst the group            To explore how social enterprise might help the park to fundraise            To explore the various skills needed to develop a social enterprise project</p>			
Topic & Time	Activity	Learning Outcome	Resources
<p><b>Introductions/ Ice breakers (10 mins)</b></p>	<p>Explain the aims of the session and ask what young people already know about social enterprise.</p>	<p>Participants get to know each other and facilitators. Introduce the idea that your community group needs to develop creative ways of fundraising alongside other income.</p>	<p>Research Icebreakers</p>
<p><b>Team Building (10 mins)</b></p>	<p>Paper cup tower: Split into teams of 4-5 and using the device provided, stack the cups into a tower, without touching the cups.            Variation: give teams different skill sets, such as 'no talking', 'two people blindfolded', and 'one arm behind their backs'.</p>	<p>Participants develop team building skills. Highlight that team members showed different skills e.g. someone emerged as leader, someone was a good listener, but all managed to overcome the barrier presented to them together.</p>	<p>Stack of cups for each team. For the moving device you will need an elastic band with 4-5 pieces of string attached tied to the band, for each team.</p>
<p><b>Social Enterprise – explanation (10 minutes)</b>  <i>Explain that a social enterprise is a business that reinvests profit in the local community and/or the environment</i></p>	<p>Describe elements of an enterprise project and what skills are needed (local knowledge, creative/design skills, numeracy for calculating profits, marketing the product or service). Ask participants to share ideas for a product or service they think is needed and could develop.</p>	<p>Participants explore how social enterprise might help the park to fundraise, the stages of planning a social enterprise project, and the skills needed (creativity and design, communications, leadership, numeracy)</p>	<p>Presentation or handouts. Worksheets e.g., budget sheet, with some products you already sell, such as prices for a cake sale, example profit made. Example product you have used before to raise money e.g., bird feeder, decorations.</p>
<p><b>Social Enterprise Task implementation (20 minutes)</b></p>	<p>Ask participants to design a product or service including costings in 20 minutes, which they will present back to the group. They may want to pick a team leader who can keep time and use the skills of others to complete the task.</p>	<p>Participants put into practice the skills needed to develop a social enterprise project. The task allows participants to try different skills: leadership, communications, creativity, numeracy.</p>	<p>Youth workers or teachers can help facilitate different groups at this point. Craft materials to make prototype products.</p>



<p><b>Social Enterprise Task – presentation (10 minutes)</b></p>	<p>Each group presents their idea and the other groups' feedback on what they like about the presentation and product.</p>	<p>Encourage team building skills amongst the group, giving and receiving constructive feedback.</p>	<p>Your group and youth workers/teacher can score each project and decide an overall winner, giving them a reward. Hopefully, they share the reward with others.</p>
<p><b>Overall session evaluation (10 minute)</b></p>	<p>Ask participant how they felt about the task and what they learned or achieved? What didn't go well about the task? Would they be interested in continuing to shape the enterprise elements of your group or work on something else in another session?</p>	<p>Participants learn to give feedback to each other and have made an impact in adding creative ideas for fundraising within the park. Participants are able to express what they enjoyed about the session and what other topics or skill they would like to learn from the community group.</p>	<p>This can be a verbal task, and someone can volunteer to write on post-it notes. Variation: ask participants to write something they learnt next to each letter in 'social enterprise'.</p>

# FUTURE PROOF PARKS



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Engaging young people through  
volunteering to preserve and celebrate  
their local heritage parks and green spaces

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## OTHER RESOURCES IN THIS SERIES

[Working with young people](#)  
[Including young people in your organisation](#)  
[Recruiting young volunteers](#)  
[Empowering young volunteers](#)  
[Safeguarding young people](#)  
[Crowdfunding Toolkit](#)

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Find out more at [www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks](http://www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks)