



Young FAN Toolkit

Working with Young Programmers

Top Tips

Currently over thirty Young Programmers groups operate across the UK. Young Programmers groups are involved in Film Festivals, Cinema Venues, Film Societies and many other settings.

Consider the following when thinking about setting up a group.

What / Why

Each group is different and will have a different purpose. Some groups exist to watch and discuss cinema within the group, but most also task their young people with creating events or programmes from the films they watch together. Consider:

- What are the required learning outcomes from the project?
- What do you want the group to create? A film programme or stand alone event?
- Do you want them to promote the event? What channels and opportunities can be made available to them to do this? Do they have a budget to create materials or props?
- What skills do they bring? What training do they require?
- Consider the age range of the group and the age they are programming for.

How

Each group is different but you will need:

- Films – will you watch these together or can they access films online at home? Films may need to be 'checked' in advance to establish suitability, eg non-certificated titles.
- Meeting space – ideally with access to a screen.
- Snacks/drinks – presume that they will be hungry.
- People – define the ages and promote to young people in your area.
- Facilitator – to structure meetings, steer activity and hold it all together. DBS/ PVG Disclosure is usually required for this person.



Promotion

Schools, colleges and local youth groups (particularly filmmaking groups) can spread the message. Into Film newsletters. Posters in your venue and in brochure are useful. Social media can be useful if you use the right channel but it is time consuming. Direct contact, either through speaking at school or community group events, can be very successful.

Evaluation

- How will the group record their event/ programme?
- What legacy (online/ print) should there be of the event and where is this kept?
- Track the audience engagement as well as numbers.

Running the Group – some considerations

- Manage expectations – yours and theirs. Be realistic about deadlines for copy/creative content as young people have many commitments at this time in their lives.
- Make it crystal clear the realistic extent of the input YPs will effectively have, and don't make a pretence of asking for input on matters that have already been decided, or for which you're just really wanting a confirmation.
- The weekly sessions should last about 120 minutes and include an interesting talk relating to the film industry, the venue, or a specific film. This could be delivered by an in-house member of staff, or an invited industry professional/filmmaker, or film tutor.
- Once an established group is set up, continue to promote the group in future promotional material and events.
- Determine each group's preferred methods of reliable, effective communication.
- The venue could provide a space in their programme once a month as 'Young Programmers' choice'.
- Where possible, provide a space on the venue website where the Young Programmers can write a monthly blog, with editorial assistance from the venue marketing team.
- Prepare a plan for each session in advance, so the Young Programmers know the structure for each session, but allow time for free discussion and play. This can be guided by creative

The assembled young audiences focus group at Screening Days in July, including some of our FEDS



- exercises that are fun but have a clear objective.
- Ensure that the club happens at the same time every week, and the YP event is the same programme slot each month.
 - Empower the YPs to feel ownership of the venue and that their contributions are making a difference. Identify aspects of the programme in advance where the YPs can help out the venue (outside of the YP club), eg volunteering for larger events, assisting with ushering duties.
 - YPs could have their own branded 'Staff Cards' and access to staff benefits such as discount at café / comp tickets for each attendance at YP Club.
 - Often working with youth or young audiences can mean large age ranges (e.g 16-25) so certain things need to be addressed such as classifications, alcohol, marketing reach, other demands on their time/availability) When clarifying the group's aims they will need to consider this. A clear focus on age range will ultimately help the group more easily define/reach their target - and work together effectively.
 - Any venue that is running a programming group needs a Public Video Screen License (PVSL), unless they're using the cinema screen to watch the films.
 - Surprise and challenge them in the choice of films they watch together. They will often surprise you back.



Young Audiences Do's and Don'ts

Tips from Young People

Do: Add Value

Competition for time and hard-earned money is stiff, and young people expect more from their entertainment activities. They don't want just a film - they can get this from the comfort of their own home - they want a night out. Think about how you can make a screening a more social experience with post-show conversations, party nights and themed food and drinks. (My favourite example was one young programmer who served up Chicken Kiev at their Eurovision night held this year in Kiev, Ukraine.)

Do: Work with young people

Why waste time second guessing what will get a younger audience into your cinema when you can work with young people to programme, promote and run events? Yes it does take time to support them through the process, and it does mean handing over control to an extent, but if you empower young programmers and producers to create, promote and manage events the rewards are plentiful: new energy and ideas, a surprising amount of fun and potentially lots of new, younger faces in the audience.

Do: Price your tickets to suit

Harking back to young people are skint - they really, really are - this was a unanimous point by all the young creatives at the Focus Group and is backed up by various pieces of research citing price as a key barrier to entry for young people. Having a clear, simple, consistent and well-communicated youth ticket offer does pay off.

Sadly, it's going to take more than emojis and graffiti fonts to get young people interested in your cinema or film festival

(Photo by Paulette Wooten on Unsplash)



Do: Go to where young people are

Think about taking events to where young people hang out. If that's not an option, then make the effort to go and talk to them (or get other young people to go and talk to them) where they hang out. Find out what they're passionate about and what they want to see in the cinema. Listen to them and, most importantly, respond to what they say. It can be pretty disheartening if you don't pay heed to their ideas, which will naturally be different to yours.

Do: Get on board with GIFs

A cute cat GIF can go a long way. Love it or hate it you've got to embrace it. This generation are visual animals so leave the lengthy copy behind and get on board with good quality social assets. If you're not a natural social media user then get someone that enjoys it to take the reins.

Don't: Assume

Think that young people are only interested in super-hero franchises? Think back to your late teens and early twenties. This is a time of cultural awakening and young people are more interested in the experimental and avant-garde than a lot of older people (who can get tired and just want to watch First Dates and drink wine, no blame here). There is a world of amazing cinema to discover, both new and old, and many of the people I spoke to were fed up with the risk-averse nature of youth programming.

Don't: Make nominal gestures

The young people I talked to were well aware when venues made nominal gestures - suddenly programming one or two youth events and getting disheartened when not a lot of people turn up. Maybe you didn't get it quite right this time but stick with it. If you don't believe you are building a relationship (which takes time) then it's never going to work. Talk to people, make changes, see what works, build trust and sustain a consistent offer for young people in your area.

Don't: Use youth speak

Overcome with a desire to speak in emojis? Think that jazzy graffiti-style font is going to attract a youth audience? They are going to smell your over-30-year-old-self a mile off. By all means work with young people to write copy and come up with promotional ideas, but if that's not possible at least keep your tone and marketing simple and authentic.

Useful Links

Here is a list of useful links and sites which can help when working with young programmers and building young audiences.

ourscreen.com/intofilm

Into Film is partnering with ourscreen to offer young people across the UK, the opportunity to set up their own film screenings for free in their local cinemas.

Pick a film, decide where and when, create your screening using your promo code. If enough people book tickets the screening happens! Download their step by step guide to get started.

Young FAN is a network for people aged 16-25 to discover new opportunities in film exhibition. The network aims to share information, exchange knowledge, promote discussion and provide young people with opportunities to broaden their experience of film exhibition.

facebook.com/BFIYoungFAN

The Young Fan Facebook page is for all people interested in working with young audiences. Here we post opportunities, offers, and further information on Young FAN activity

facebook.com/groups/YoungFAN

The Young Fan Facebook Group is for those aged 16-25 who are young programmers or want to work in exhibition

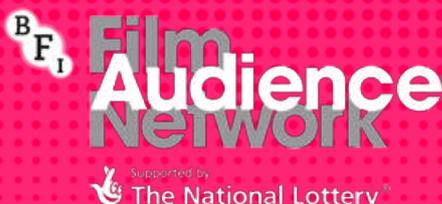
bfi.org.uk/film-audience-network-1

The BFI Film Audience Network (BFI FAN) is a major initiative developed to enable film and events experts to work in partnership to boost film audiences across the UK, particularly in the areas of specialised and independent British film.

Find your local Film Hub for bursaries and opportunities.

Thanks to Nicola Kettlewood, Head of Education & Learning CMI, Edinburgh, Alice Quigley, Marketing Manager, Film Hub South West & West Midlands, Mike Tait, Discovery Film Festival, The Independent Cinema Office, Into Film, and all the young programmers who contributed to the first Young FAN focus groups at ICO Screening Days, Leicester Phoenix July 2017.

A toolkit by Dan Thomas and Film Hub Central East.



**Film Hub
Central East**