



Introduction to Working with Young People

Comparing the two projects

The two projects we've chosen to illustrate here, the Madcap project and the Factory project, are different but also similar in all sorts of ways, and I think what comes through most strongly is the similarities, the way in which the workers are looking to engage with young people on their own territory, and looking to where their interests are and helping them to develop those, and valuing what it is they bring to that work. I think those are key aspects to work with young people which are common across the diversity of context in which it takes place. I think it's important to emphasise the common ground in the way in which these workers, whether they're professionals or volunteers, the way in which they're engaging with young people, and in this case we've shown two projects which are both trying to reach audiences which are particularly difficult to engage with, these are not the kind of young people who would naturally walk through the door of a traditional youth centre, and the other similarities you'd see with them is that they operate on the basis of voluntary participation that the young people can in both cases walk away if they don't like what's happening.

This isn't like social services or probation work, it's work where attendance of young people is voluntary, so that's what distinguishes it, and that's what we characterise in the course as work with young people.

What we're looking at in these two examples is very much work with young people as it happens in the UK. I think the aspects of this that could be transferable to other places and other audiences are to do with the values, the principles, the ways of working which underpin both of these approaches.

They have an educational intent, they're trying to develop these young people's skills, abilities, knowledge, understanding, and they're based on the quality of the relationship that the worker is able to build up with the young people in gaining their trust, in being somebody who is prepared to listen to them and work alongside them.