

A photograph of three young women with long blonde hair, smiling and looking at a smartphone held by the woman on the right. They are in a hallway with white lockers in the background. The woman on the left is wearing a yellow sweater, the middle woman is wearing a black top, and the woman on the right is wearing a light blue top.

Communication and marketing Mahis

Communication and fund-raising

These materials provide tips for the internal and external communication of a group of youths, provision of information, as well as marketing and fund-raising.

Communication and marketing can be used to reach youths who might be interested in the activities or bring an audience to a performance, exhibition or some other event.

Effective internal communication ensures that all members of the group have the necessary information on the current status of the project and the next steps.

Corporate cooperation can be used to increase the budget of a project or gain access to the necessary materials.

› **Communicating about the youths' project is worth it:**

- Young people do amazing things! Publicity increases appreciation of the youths' activities
 - Positive publicity can get other young people to become interested in the activities
 - You are allowed to take pride in your project – publicity can encourage and motivate the participants to become more committed to the project
 - Communication provides a positive image of the background organization: it shows you value activities that engage youths
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Implementation of communication

When planning your communications, you should first think of who you want to reach with your message. Is the communication intended to bring more youths into the activities? Does the communication target an audience who could come see the project the youths have created?

Various social media platforms, particularly Facebook, provide a good communication channel. You can create a Facebook page or Instagram account for your project, through which anyone can follow the progress of the project and which can also be used to provide information about the activities of the group in its own voice.

More than one person can participate in communication, but for overall management it is generally advisable to appoint a single person to be in charge of communications.

Internal communication

Internal communication is important for grouping and efficient flow of information. You should agree on the flow of information within the group right at the start of the activities. There are several options, from which the group should pick the most appropriate ones.

In the meetings, you can discuss what the individual members have done, what is currently in works, and what still needs to be done. At the same time, you can make any changes to the plans that might be necessary. In addition to regular meetings, you should ensure that each member of the group has access to the necessary information, for example on what was agreed in the previous meeting.

Think about the most effective communication method for you in between meetings. Possible meth-

ods include email, text messages, WhatsApp messages or a Facebook group.

External communication

If you want to provide constant information on the stages of the group activity, you can start communications immediately. The marketing for a public event (show, opening, exhibition, etc.) should begin at least one month before the event itself.

The easiest method for marketing your event is Facebook, where you can create an event that is open to everyone, to which each member can invite their Facebook friends.

If you want to reach the local media (local newspapers and radio), you should email a press release for the event to the media houses approximately one week before the event. As the media operators are primarily attached to current events, they may not react to press releases that are published a month before the event, for example. On the other hand, if you release the information too late, no one will have time to react properly to it.

> Effective press release

- Write an engaging headline
- Pay particular attention to the first three sentences – they may be decisive for whether your press release is read from beginning to end
- Explain clearly what is happening, when, and where
- Be concise, avoid rambling
- Emphasize the youths' role in the project
- Remember to include the contact information of someone who can provide more information about the project if necessary
- A single page is an appropriate length for a press release

In addition to social media and press releases, you should also use traditional methods such as posters. For example, is it possible to leave a notification on a notice board in local stores, libraries, parish buildings, youth clubs or schools? You can make a bunch of posters with the group or create a single poster

that is then printed. We recommend approaching a local printing shop for a deal or even sponsorship.

Even though the group activity may not result in a public event, local media might still be interested in writing a short story about it. In this case, the prior notice sent to media should particularly include information on what the activity has meant for the group of youths in question. If you want to refrain from highlighting the individual youths in the story using names and photos, the story could instead focus on the activity of the group or the role of the instructor.

From the perspective of local media, activities taking place in their area are more important. Thus, this is one possible viewpoint that could be used to pitch the story. You can produce a print-ready press release or approach the media with a more informal email. The contact information for media houses and reporters can usually be found online quite easily. They may also have a dedicated email address for story ideas. Please keep in mind that interviewees have the right to review their statements if they wish and you can also ask to see the entire story before it is published.

If the story includes factual errors, you can request rectification for them.

Organizing an event

Your event could, for example, be a theater production, a dance performance that engages the audience, a theme day outside a local school or a panel discussion event. Reaching a large audience does not have to be the goal of the event. The end result will be valuable regardless of the number of people in the audience.

When organizing an event, you should focus on planning your communications, scheduling, division of tasks, and budgeting. The enclosed questions are intended to help with division of tasks and planning the event.

› Consider first

- Who do you want to reach with your communication?

- Should you begin communicating now or wait to market the event later?
- Who will participate in the communications?
- Which communication channels/ methods would you like to use?
- What specifically is interesting about your project?
- Why are the youths involved in the project? How will you provide information about the youths participating in the activity?

› Which channels should you use?

- Social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat)
- Local media (which mediums operate in your area?)
- Posters / notice boards
- The grapevine
- Something else?

Throwing ideas around

1. What type of an event?

- Goal or objective?
- Subject and format?
- Do you have to consider the scheduling of the event?
- Will the event be realized similarly to a previous one or would you like to do something new?
- Will you invite guest speakers or performers to the event?

2. Date and scheduling

- Take note of vacations and holidays
- Major local events – will they grab all the attention, or do they provide an opportunity for cooperation?
- The organizers' personal plans
- Is there enough room in the schedule to allow for changes?

3. Organization

- Distribution of labor and areas of responsibility
- Agreeing on regular meetings of the organizing team

Practical implementation

1. General issues

- Program and schedule
- Financial plan
- Potential partners

2. Facilities

- Making the necessary reservations for the facilities
- Decorations and flowers
- Signs and accessibility
- Necessary equipment and tech (electricity, lights, sound, the Internet, computer, video projector...)

3. Marketing and communication

- Social media (Facebook event or similar)
- Local media (contact by email, press release)
- Posters, flyers

4. Other things to consider

- Equipment transport
- Weather impact

- Catering for the team
- Will you offer coffee etc. to the audience?
- Required permits (copyright, organizational permits, lottery permit, etc.)

After the event

1. Venue

- Cleaning
- Returning rented/loaned equipment
- Lost and found

2. Evaluation of the event

- Did you achieve your objectives? What was successful, what wasn't?
 - Thanking your partners
- Tip!** A picture of the event is always a nice addition to a thank you note.
- Reporting

Corporate cooperation

You can also approach companies to support the project or event created by the youths. There are as many opportunities for cooperation as there are ideas! The cooperation does not have to include monetary transactions if your group does not need additional funding. For example, gaining access to facilities or supplies free of charge could be substantial for the realization of the activity.

Companies are always looking for new forms of operation to reach youths and to support their activities, so don't be afraid to approach them. Cooperation can also create direct contacts at the companies for the youths, which may be helpful in finding a summer job or training job, for example. At the same time, the entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to meet local youths and to hear about their interests.

When considering and searching for potential partners, you should think of a sector with companies that might be interested in supporting youth group activities. For example, is there a driving school, sporting goods store, recreational youth facility or

a music store operating in the area? The premise for cooperating with a company is that the partner is always offered something in return.

The following includes some aspects you could use to justify the cooperation for a company.

The youths themselves

Young people are valuable, which is why the company wants to support the project.

Work

Many companies are prepared to pay for work and may have minor tasks that require doing such as handing out flyers, cleaning or mending things.

Reaching the right target audience

Youths of a certain age might be reachable through group activities.

When thinking about what you could offer in return, keep in mind the regulations regarding marketing to minors. More information is available on the website of the Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority.

Fund-raising with activities

Corporate cooperation is not the only option for fund-raising, as the group of youths can also raise funds by themselves. Separate fund-raising operations may not be necessary, and instead a jumble sale or running a kiosk may provide enough funds to cover the expenses of the project.

Themed jumble sale

The organizers baked products and produced other items for sale.

Coloring book

A group of youths created a coloring book using pictures they had drawn. Companies and organizations bought spaces for their own pictures in the book. The book was then sold in local stores.

Summer kiosk

Youths opened an old kiosk for the duration of their summer vacation where they sold baked goods and other products they had made.

Raffle

A group of youths organized a raffle whose prizes

were collected as donations from local businesses.

Event for children and youths

An event including various activities was held at the schoolyard. Information on the event was provided through the school.

Fund-raising for a bicycle tour around Åland Islands

Youths performed tasks for local entrepreneurs: painting a terrace, cleaning windows, inventory, etc.

Inventory attack

A youth sports team performed an inventory for a local store as voluntary work.

Christmas cards

The youths created stylish Christmas cards that were sold in a local shop.

Fish nets

A local shopkeeper donated nets to a youth fishing club, as they wanted to support the wellbeing of youths.

Changing tires

In the summer, a group of youths provided a tire changing service at a central parking area. A local business loaned the tools used for the operation.

Musical

Tickets to a school musical were sold to businesses whose logos were included in the program in return.

Photos: Mahis-groups & Nuorten Akatemia

