

Summary

MYAN NSW has taken a youth-led approach to adapting its work during COVID-19. They have been running a range of youth-led activities, including online games, facilitating social connection between youth, meditation and yoga sessions, and consultations with young people to understand how young people are feeling at this time. The youth at MYAN NSW have been instrumental in supporting the organisation to use new technologies, and a key lesson learnt for MYAN NSW is the value of employing young people.

Making a Zig Zag on Zoom
post COVID-19 meeting
with @myannsw



My word of the Day:
understood

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CASE STUDY

Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW

Background

MYAN NSW mentors and supports young people aged 12-25 from refugee and migrant backgrounds, born in Australia and overseas. It aims to support young people to build the knowledge, skills and confidence to be active citizens. This is done through activities such as financial literacy training, education and employment support, leadership workshops, events, and supporting young people to attend and speak at conferences.

How did MYAN NSW adapt during COVID-19?

MYAN NSW's activities typically rely on face to face interaction. MYAN NSW sought ideas from young people on activities that could be done online, and how best to deliver these online. As a result, the young people employed at MYAN NSW led a range of online activities, including:

- Lunch time drop-ins on Zoom using virtual 'breakout rooms,' where people can talk in smaller groups online. These drop-ins give people an opportunity to catch up and check-in with each other. The drop-ins have two youth workers on the line, but young people lead the conversation. The drop ins go for about an hour and run one or two times per week.
- 'Iso-trivia' event using Instagram. For 'iso-trivia', a young worker went live on Instagram, and participants requested to join the event to answer trivia questions and connect with others.
- Meditation and yoga for young people using Zoom.
- Running games and activities using 'Kahoot!'
- Working with Youth Ambassadors to develop social media posts in multiple languages with messages that support young people during COVID-19.
- Zoom consultation with young people to help the sector understand young people's experiences during COVID-19.
- Partnering with Marrickville Legal Centre to run a webinar about what people can and cannot do under current COVID-19 restrictions.



Challenges

Moving activities to online mediums has come with some challenges.

This has included:

1. Many young people have limited access to technology, while managing multiple commitments that rely on technology such as school or TAFE. This has highlighted the need to advocate for and facilitate equitable access to technology.
2. Some new approaches trialled did not work as well as anticipated, or took more time and resources than expected. There were some activities that, on reflection, did not achieve an impact commensurate with the amount of time and effort required. However, without being willing to try some new things that did not work, MYAN NSW would not have discovered the new things that worked well. It is important to take risks, even if they are not always rewarded.

Outcomes

Through this work, MYAN NSW has maintained effective and meaningful social connection between young people, despite an inability to meet face to face.

Key Learnings

This experience has generated three key learnings for MYAN NSW:

1. It's important to take risks and try new things – the rewards for doing so are high.
2. Sometimes a new approach won't work, and that's okay.
3. Employing young people is of great benefit to organisations.



More information

MYAN NSW spoke about their work adapting to an online environment on SCoA's webinar 'Settlement Service Innovation During COVID-19.' You can view the webinar at:

<http://scoa.org.au/innovation-centre/settlement-service-innovation-covid-19-webinar/>

You can also contact MYAN NSW through: <http://myannsw.org.au/>

