

Youth Participation Programme Case study



The Dragon's Den Decides

With Manchester University, The Museum of Science and Industry and Manchester Beacon Awards for Manchester Science Festival

Context

The Dragon's Den Decides Project won an award from the Beacon Science Festival to train young people to become commissioners and planners for a large event to take place at Manchester Science Festival in the Autumn of 2010.

It was important for the project to inspire, encourage, engage and empower young people and their community. The young people had a great chance to work side by side on an equal level with Scientists and MA students helping to demystify academia. ICA:UK's role was to bridge the gap between the two groups through planning creative processes.

Process

Academics and Scientists at Manchester University devised pitches for events that they believed would fulfill the criteria of being a fun, engaging and different event for young people to get involved with, that would be run as part of the science festival. The ideas for the event were pitched 'Dragons Den' style to a group of Dragons aged between 12 and 19.

The Dragons Den Decides

This year the Science Festival is asking YOU to choose which of the exciting, interactive events gets the go ahead! Young people from Manchester are being invited to judge the ideas pitched by academics in biology, chemistry, medicine, physics and technology. This will then become an event for the festival on 28th October.

What are you waiting for, get involved!



Funding: There is a stack of money available to award the successful pitch and create the event.

Pitches: We need scientists to come up with ideas for an event to be held in the Science Festival.

Dragons: We need young people to judge the pitches and decide which will go through to a real event.

Scientists, we need you!
Scientists of all disciplines: Pitch an idea
contact Emily Crompton
email thedragonsdendecides@gmail.com
for more information

Dragons, we need you!
Dragons - Young People aged 12-19
contact Sarah Evans
email thedragonsdendecides@gmail.com
for more information



30 scientists were contacted and encouraged to pitch an idea from backgrounds in biology, medicine, technology, chemistry and physics. Sarah Evans and Emily Crompton at from ICA:UK visited youth projects all over the city of Manchester to recruit dragons from diverse backgrounds.

There were three elements to the project-

1-Training the young people to be Dragons (including trying out their own pitches to see what made a good pitch)

2-Deciding on the winning pitch in a real life 'Den' followed by action planning the winning pitch with Dragons and Scientists working alongside each other.

3-Running the event 'The Bacteria Party'.

The Dragon's training day

The day began with team building. The group looked at what would be positive attributes and skills needed to be a successful Dragon and a good pitcher. We worked out a schedule for the 'Den' day and designed questions.



Dragons Den Day

The day began with a run-down of schedule, and setting up filming equipment to film the four successful pitches. Each pitch took 3 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of questions.



The Dragon's announced the winner of the £500 prize. The clear winner was the Bacteria party which was well presented and excited everyone present.



Event planning



The scientist and Dragons worked with the Dragons to plan the event. The young people furthered their knowledge of planning and learnt how to budget and cost an event. An "I am a Dragon" 'T' shirt was designed and locally printed.



The Event Day

The bacteria Party aimed to engage at least 40 young people who would interact with 6 Bacteria Party info and activity 'stations' at The Zion Arts Centre in Hulme.



The group exceeded their target with 52 attendees coming along, who enjoyed the party atmosphere with cake and party bags taking their passports to be stamped at the 6 individual interactive learning stations, gaining factual and fun goodies along with pieces of a 'bacteria puzzle' through games, making models and 3D imagery.



Outcomes & impact

The young people have new project planning skills; a greater understanding of what makes a good pitch; higher levels of confidence and a plethora community work skills which they can share with their peers, and which will help them throughout their lives. The scientists had the chance to interact with young people and to learn more about engaging young people in science.

“The Bacteria Party is a great idea to help promote understanding of science and have some fun at the same time. The team at the School of Pharmacy did a great presentation and convinced the Dragons that this was the event that was most likely to inspire the local community to learn about science, the good as well as the bad sides of bacteria and how it affects our lives.”

Sarah Evans – ICA:UK Lead Project Worker