

Case Study

Guildford College Group Student Union

What was your interfaith project?

Culture, faith and identity day – “I:AM?”

How did you ensure students were involved in the development of your project?

I advertised (posters, video screens and internet) at the outset, asking all student reps plus some other relevant students directly. From this, I identified a few core students who were really excited about taking part and met them several times in the run up to the event to discuss ideas. I also gave them ownership of activities we chose – for example we decided to ask a selection of students what identity, culture and belief meant to them, and it was the students themselves who took charge of selecting students and asking questions!

What impact did this project have on students you work with and within your students' union or college?

- How did it deliver one of the following outcomes:
 - o Encourage engagement between faith societies
 - o Increase understanding amongst students about different religions and beliefs
 - o Increase dialogue and collaborative action
- Were there any other outcomes from the project?

We currently only have one small faith society (Christian Union) but the event raised the profile of faith and culture within the College and very much emphasised that it was acceptable to talk about these sometimes difficult topics. The event also increased understanding of other faiths (through a quiz around College and a questionnaire on identity, the results of which were anonymously published on posters around College). There was a graffiti wall on “What is Identity?” which certainly increased dialogue – despite a few non-serious answers, there were some interesting responses, and even those that did not write on the wall commented when passing. This gave the students a voice and brought many discussions which are already happening between students out into the open. Different departments were able to get involved whilst at the same time fulfilling their own curriculum objectives, for example the dance students demonstrated an African themed dance which they had prepared, and hospitality students baked a rainbow cake.

What lessons did you learn in delivering the project that might be useful to other students' unions?

Some activities which required greater participation or time from the students, such as a quiz, were less popular unless incorporated into lessons. Free food based on different cultures on the other hand was very effective and, as expected, drew people towards displays which then started discussions!

There were some students who did not want to be involved in the initial planning but then expressed opinions on the final ‘product’, so I would look for other ways to get more students involved from the outset if I were to plan a similar event again.

Do you have any feedback from participants at your event?

It was great to hear that students were talking the event – it caused an unusual buzz in the corridors, which was very positive. Students really enjoyed the free food and learnt quite a lot from info flags that accompanied this – many mentioned that they had learnt some interesting and surprising facts over the course of the event.

Photo/Video evidence of your event:



