

Doing the Groundwork

Sarah and Becca's Reflections - Part 1

As well as the groundwork we did before the project started, we also did ongoing groundwork outside of our sessions with the group whilst the project was actually running. Groundwork before the project helped us to get organised and prepare for the group beginning. Groundwork during the project kept things running smoothly and meant that we didn't lose momentum during sessions having to do things other than the research. Our groundwork took a number of different forms:

- Visiting heritage sites before taking young people

Although this was time consuming, it was useful for us to do a visit to a heritage site before taking any of the girls along so that we were certain it would be a worthwhile trip for them. Due to the limited time we had with the girls each week, we had to make sure that their time was spent as wisely as possible. We both worked around our other jobs, and where possible split the visits up so that neither of us had too far to travel. This was worth the extra time and effort to see how much the girls got out of the visits we did take them on, as we knew we hadn't sent them on a wild goose chase, which could have potentially turned them off from the project.

- Using existing resources

Having both been youth workers for a few years, and with Becca's experience as a teacher before becoming a youth worker, we both had a range of existing resources which could be adapted to suit the project. We both collected together any games, activities and worksheets we had used with previous groups of young people and tweaked them to work for Scotswummin. We also searched online and at local heritage sites for activities they already used to see if these would be suitable for our group. There's no point reinventing the wheel – have a look for anything that's out there that can be adapted to work for your project.

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- Physically meeting people to build relationships

We started promoting the project on social media before we began working with our group, and made a lot of connections with people in the local community this way. We made the time to meet in person where we could, and even links that we made who didn't end up being project partners still gave us access to resources, ideas and promotion opportunities. As well as being beneficial to the project, meeting with other people gave us a boost of confidence and enthusiasm for the project seeing how interested and excited other people were to be a part of it.

- Live tweeting

Neither of us were particularly confident in our social media abilities before the project started but we found it to be one of our most useful tools in building connections and keeping the momentum of the project going. We were both admins on the Facebook, Sarah ran the Instagram account and Becca was in charge of Twitter. We found that different people interacted with us on different platforms and made sure to share posts across all three sites to ensure that everyone involved in the project was kept up to date. Having not used Twitter before the project, Becca spent time studying other Twitter accounts to borrow ideas on how to engage followers and reach a wider audience and discovered live tweeting. Live tweeting our visits to heritage sites always proved to be popular with our followers and thankfully didn't take too much extra time for the big impact it had.

- Wummin Crush Wednesday

The hashtag #womancrushwednesday is used regularly across different social media platforms for people to share a photo or post about a woman they find attractive or admirable. Part way through our project, we came up with our own Scotswummin twist on this and created #wummincrushwednesday. Every Wednesday we would share a photo and short biography of an inspiring Scottish woman. For historical figures, we generally just used our hashtag and a hashtag of the woman's name, but for modern day women, we always tagged them in the post where possible. Unfortunately tagging JK Rowling didn't get us a response but her charity Lumos did reply to our tweet and thank us for our support!

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