

All Wales Conference 24th May 2017 - Contributors or Consumers?

Comments:

Life experience is the only qualification.

U3As should remember that the convenor/co-ordinator is not the teacher – they are the facilitator.

The image of U3A as a white, middle class organization needs addressing, we need to broaden our appeal.

Not enough emphasis on the social or companionship element.

Learning with U3A is valuable for an active, positive attitude for our 3rd age.

Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join the U3A can do so. People outside the existing area of their U3A are not always able to get to meetings.

Consider access to all meetings and groups is available for all those with mobility problems. Outreach to severely disabled/residents of care-homes aspirational rather than practical.

Communication and promotion is important. Communication – for those not online. Bilingual publicity.

Constant liaison needed with members regarding their thoughts and ideas.

Difficult to adhere to 'open to all' eg members in wheelchairs may not be able to access all interest groups, must try within reason.

Some venues and people's houses – inaccessible.

Groups being 'full' or closed – needs someone to intervene – as it is an issue – if there is a 'waiting list' – start a new group!

Open to all – cultural, social, economic divide, ethnicity.

Consider reviewing – provisions already made, barriers and responding to need.

Members are reluctant to become teachers – fear of not being up to the task.

People who give lifts to U3A activities – should not be out of pocket.

Questions

How are different U3As run? Use the Network to find out?

Do we encourage participation by people who need carer support to get to a meeting?

Is 'University' name off putting?

Is forming new interest groups more difficult in a small or rural U3A?

How do we provide continued access to the learning – for people who cannot attend the meetings?

How to cope with groups that feel they need a 'specialist' teacher?

Is there a need for translation facilities for website and at events?

Do members understand the role of the Third Age Trust?

Is succession planning needed to provide continuity at all levels?

Ideas for encouraging members to Contribute not just Consume:

Review and develop ways to make your U3A accessible to all, hearing loops, ground floor venues, disabled toilets, Independence manager – for disabled members

Take U3As into care-homes – organize groups in care-homes

Hold an open day to publicise the U3A and promote the 3 basic principles

Cultivate self-help by empowering people to take on leadership of a group – small steps to start with but make it enjoyable, fun and non critical

Be prepared to lead

Pro-actively promote new groups – ask members for ideas and facilitate the formation of a new group with the members who have expressed an interest

Have a rota – all members take turns to do the tasks

Members have different strengths – encourage all to lead a session in an interest group

Encourage and support group convenors, especially of new groups

Short annual report from group convenors – to the whole membership

Group co-ordinators meet to share positive/negative experiences

Get a few members to present their life's experiences at an open meeting – interesting and encourages others to come forward

Publicity board outside open meeting

Pop-up session at monthly meeting – by a group to demonstrate what they do

Membership pack for new members – with principles made obvious, updated contacts, list of interest groups

FAQ sheet for new members – include 3 basic principles

New members coffee mornings – emphasise the 3 basic principles

Follow up new members – by a committee member

Ideas for encouraging members to Contribute not just Consume: Contd.

Quizzes involving local U3As

Liaise with local U3As on subjectgroups

Publicity – local papers to publish weekly timetable, awareness days in local shopping centre, distribution of newsletter, personal recommendations, on website, local surgeries

Use all resources available – Moocs, National Resource Centre, National and Regional website, TED,

Harness the power of new media – website, newsletter online, Facebook, Twitter

Use the website and the Network to share information, pass on ideas

Welcome pack for committee members – include directory, constitution, duties

Help members with their power point presentations

Show and tell – for 5 minutes – everyone to contribute

A list of groups given to all members

Share groups or resources with local U3As

Recirculate your TAM – in doctor's surgery

Travel buddies – to ensure people can attend meetings

2 taster sessions before joining

Welcomer at the door

Please note that all the above are people's ideas/ opinions – they are not necessarily the views of the Third Age Trust

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