



Record labels owned and managed by youths



The Youth Music Exchange (YME) is a literacy, technology, and youth development initiative that transforms schools, after-school programs, and community-based organizations into record labels owned and managed by youths. The children write and record the music, develop marketing strategies, design the artwork, create a business plan, and sustain their company by bringing a youth-generated product to the community in which it was created.

Dr. Michael Bitz, Ed.D. & Dr. Bill McKinney, Ph.D., Co-founders

www.YouthMusicExchange.org

What YME Accomplishes

Academic Reinforcement: Children become better readers, writers, and mathematicians by engaging in an intensive process leading to a youth-generated product.

Technological Literacy: Children learn about and harness hardware, software, and web applications in the development of their own companies, which improves their success in school, after school, and in life.

Career Pathways: Children develop career skills by gaining experience in business, marketing, and production, as well as participating in internships focused on job readiness. Children work directly with professionals in these fields in order to gain mentorship and guidance.

Social and Character Development: Children develop social skills related to conflict resolution, problem solving, and teamwork, along with enhanced concepts of cultural tolerance and personal identity.

Community Building: Children positively impact their communities through the distribution of sustainable, youth-generated products and community-based performances.

How YME Works

YME establishes four departments in every school-based record label. The process launches with intensive workshops for educators and is guided by a detailed curriculum for students and teachers.

- Music

The music department recruits and develops rappers, singers, and musicians who will appear on the recording. Students in the music department focus on the music itself: the songs, lyrics, and message.

- Production

The production department is responsible for rehearsing, recording, editing, and producing the songs on the recording. The production team helps hone the musical artists, prepares them for recording, assists the recording session, and oversees the technical components of the record label.

- Art

The art/design department creates the artwork and layout for the CD and jewel-case insert. The team also creates marketing and promotional material for the label by collaborating with the other departments. Students combine their creative artistic skills with increased understanding of digital graphic design and desktop publishing.

- Marketing.

The responsibility of the marketing department is to plan and implement strategies for promoting the label in the school, in the community, and on the web; the marketing department also helps the record company become sustainable by selling the CD and hosting a culminating performance.

YME Results In...

- CD recording featuring the students' original music, artwork, and marketing ideas (75 copies with additional copies available for fundraising purchases)
- School web portal where students upload original music, updates, and blog entries
- Printed marketing materials (i.e. postcards and posters) announcing the record label
- Launch party and celebration of the record label

Who It Serves

YME is targeted at the improvement of the lives of underserved youths (ages 9-18) in high-poverty communities of the United States.

Sustainability

A key component to YME is sustainability, both on the site-based level as well as the organizational level. On the site-based level, participating students will use their CD, along with performances and other events, to generate revenue that can be reinvested in their record companies. They own the equipment, software, and other project tools, enabling their record labels to continue year after year.

Site Requirements

Participating schools and after-school programs need to have:

- 20 hours of class time
- at least one dedicated group leader
- space to implement the program
- at least one computer with speakers and an Internet connection
- pencils and markers
- a group of interested, creative children

Who We Are

YME was co-founded by Dr. Michael Bitz, Ed.D. and Dr. Bill McKinney, Ph.D. Dr. Bitz is a Senior Research Associate at Teachers College, the graduate school of education at Columbia University. He is the founding director of The Comic Book Project, an arts-based youth development initiative that is hosted by Teachers College and has impacted thousands of youths across the United States. Dr. McKinney is the Deputy Director of the Howard Samuels Center for State Policy and Management at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. An urban anthropologist, Dr. McKinney has focused on youth development and program evaluation in urban centers across the United States with specific emphasis on youths in New York City and Philadelphia.



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