

Islington U3A – Coordinators Survey 2018 - Survey Results

Rev 02

Introduction

A total of 48 Group Coordinators replied to the email inviting them to complete the survey. There are 57 Coordinators (covering 62 groups). This represents a response rate of 84% and hence gives us a robust set of findings. A very good response rate for surveys – thank you!

There were 4 main sections covering 34 questions. All tailored to seek the Group Coordinators views on how iU3A in total was performing. The main sections addressed were:

- A. General information about Coordinator & Performance against the Constitution? (2 questions)
- B. What's Important / What Needs Improving? (26 questions)
- C. How do we get more people to contribute? (5 questions)
- D. Any Other Ideas? (1 question)

Section B was split into sub-sections of:

- B1. Communications
- B2. What aspects of our membership are important to you
- B3. Learning Opportunities
- B4. Organisation
- B5. Facilities
- B6. Environment

Summary

With regard to the questions asked, in summary the Coordinators responses indicated:

- Overall iU3A is performing well
- Our communications methods are good (with the Bulletin, the Website & direct emails from themselves, all being very important)
- They see the need for a good EC; they don't see it needs to be more visible
- They don't see the need for more work / steering groups
- Important to have good Group Coordinators
- Mixed views on importance of regular attendance or flexible (probably due to type of group)
- Saw the need for a good range of Group activities
- Believed that most events should be held locally
- Didn't feel it necessary that more events were held in the same place
- A spread of views on need for more ethnic or socio-economic mix
- Agreed that a friendly welcoming environment was important

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- Believed that members should be encouraged to try other groups
- That there should be better communication that everything depends on our volunteers
- Better communications on how Volunteers can contribute
- Quite a few comments left on how to get more help from the Members
- More 'educational' events, rather than 'social'

Action Plan

The following actions (follow through) are suggested:

1. Give feedback to all Group Coordinators (Summary & follow report).
2. Make the full report available to the membership.
3. Consider creating a system where it's clear to group attendees where regular attendance is a requirement (eg add to Group Listing web page?).
4. Consider setting up a working group (of Group Coordinators) on ethnic / socio-eco mix.
5. Consider setting up a review on 'Are We Getting Enough Help from our Volunteers'.

Details

Where a scoring scale was used, 5 scores highest, 1 lowest.

In the tables, 1st row = Score Choices

2nd row = percentage total of responses

3rd row = number of responses

A. Overview

A1. How long have you been a Group Coordinator?

Less than a year	1 to 2 years	2 to 4 years	since the beginning of iU3A (5 years)
21%	27%	25%	27%
10	13	12	13

Interpretation: quite an even spread, some long term coordinators others fairly new.

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A2. Overall, against our Constitution, how well are we performing?

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	4%	42%	54%
0	0	2	20	26

Interpretation: Coordinators believe we are achieving a high performance against our constitutional aims.

B. What's Important (good aspects/ not so good)

B1. Communications

B1.1 Bulletins (fortnightly)

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	4%	42%	54%
0	0	2	20	26

Interpretation: Coordinators believe that the Bulletins are very good/ very important. Hence need to maintain frequency and quality.

B1.2 Newsletters (every 6 months)

1	2	3	4	5
0%	8%	13%	52%	27%
0	4	6	25	13

Interpretation: Coordinators believe that the Newsletter are fairly important (but less important than the Bulletins). Do we maintain at 2 issues a year (we were at 3 but have dropped for the last 18 months)?

B1.3 iU3A Website

1	2	3	4	5
0%	8%	8%	31%	52%
0	4	4	15	25

Interpretation: Coordinators believe that the website is very important.

B1.4 Direct Emails (from Exec Committee) - currently rarely used

1	2	3	4	5
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8%	15%	27%	35%	15%
4	7	13	17	7

Interpretation: Coordinators believe that the EC direct emails are fairly important.

B1.5 Direct Emails from Group Coordinators

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	6%	33%	60%
0	0	3	16	29

Interpretation: Coordinators believe that the direct emails from themselves are very important.

B2 What aspects of our membership are important to you

B2.1 Opportunity of meeting new people

1	2	3	4	5
0%	2%	33%	33%	31%
0	1	16	16	15

Interpretation: bit of a spread but mean is that this is important.

B2.2 Opportunity of meeting like minded people

1	2	3	4	5
0%	4%	19%	25%	52%
0	2	9	12	25

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B2.3 Ethnic mix

1	2	3	4	5
6%	10%	33%	25%	25%
3	5	16	12	12

Interpretation: Quite a wide spread of opinion. Coordinators didn't see this as that important.

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B2.4 Membership should span all soci-economic classes

1	2	3	4	5
2%	6%	23%	19%	50%
1	3	11	9	24

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B3. Learning Opportunities

B3.1 Broad programme of interest groups/ something to suit all

1	2	3	4	5
2%	0%	6%	21%	71%
1	0	3	10	34

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B3.2 Chance of developing new skills/ new interests

1	2	3	4	5
2%	2%	6%	40%	50%
1	1	3	19	24

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B3.3 Able to share enthusiasm for the subject

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	4%	38%	58%
0	0	2	18	28

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B3.4 Able to join learning projects across London

1	2	3	4	5
8%	10%	40%	23%	19%
4	5	19	11	9

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as not very important – they are not looking for this as a need. Are they aware of national Subject Experts/ Advisors?

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B3.5 Good monthly speakers

1	2	3	4	5
0%	2%	21%	29%	48%
0	1	10	14	23

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B4. Organisation

B4.1 Good Executive Committee

1	2	3	4	5
0%	2%	13%	31%	54%
0	1	6	15	26

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B4.2 Make Executive Committee more visible

1	2	3	4	5
2%	8%	38%	33%	19%
1	4	18	16	9

Interpretation: Coordinators didn't see this as a problem / a need.

B4.3 Have more working groups/ steering groups to assist the Executive Committee

1	2	3	4	5
2%	6%	40%	38%	15%
1	3	19	18	7

Interpretation: Coordinators didn't see this as a problem / a need.

B4.4 Good Group Coordinators

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	6%	33%	60%
0	0	3	16	29

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important – naturally!

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B4.5 Flexible – some groups where you can just turn up, don't have to attend each time

1	2	3	4	5
8%	4%	23%	29%	35%
4	2	11	14	17

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important. Can we support them by creating a 'classification' system – those groups where regular attendance / commitment is required vs groups where you can just chose to come to the odd session?

B4.6 Broad programme of interest groups/ something to suit all

1	2	3	4	5
0%	2%	6%	19%	73%
0	1	3	9	35

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important.

B4.7 Reduce Group waiting lists

1	2	3	4	5
4%	6%	35%	35%	19%
2	3	17	17	9

Interpretation: Coordinators didn't share this as a problem / a need unfortunately. Hence probably don't work at reducing our current high waiting / groups full situation.

B5. Facilities

B5.1 All events held locally / everything is nearby

1	2	3	4	5
2%	4%	33%	31%	29%
1	2	16	15	14

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important.

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B5.2 Should hold more events at a central common location

1	2	3	4	5
19%	19%	31%	19%	13%
9	9	15	9	6

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fneutral – not that important.

B6. Environment

B6.1 Bustling – so much going on, positive feel

1	2	3	4	5
2%	2%	17%	52%	27%
1	1	8	25	13

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important.

B6.2 Friendly - replacement of camaraderie of workplace

1	2	3	4	5
2%	4%	17%	50%	27%
1	2	8	24	13

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important.

B6.3 Get people to try out more/ other Groups

1	2	3	4	5
4%	6%	35%	46%	8%
2	3	17	22	4

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important.

C. How do we get more people to contribute?

C1. Better communication of the fact that there are no paid staff, everything is run by volunteers

1	2	3	4	5
2%	4%	27%	25%	42%

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1	2	13	12	20
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Interpretation: Coordinators agreed this was important.

C2. Better communications of the things that volunteers can do, how they can contribute

1	2	3	4	5
2%	2%	13%	42%	42%
1	1	6	20	20

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as very important (more opportunity?).

C3. Publish the needs, the opportunities regularly

1	2	3	4	5
2%	2%	13%	44%	40%
1	1	6	21	19

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as fairly important.

C4. Present the subject/ requirement at Monthly Meetings

1	2	3	4	5
2%	10%	23%	33%	31%
1	5	11	16	15

Interpretation: Coordinators saw this as reasonably important.

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C5. Any other means you think we should pursue?

Members should be made aware that without volunteers iU3A would not exist.. I spent 2 years on the original Steering Committee so know how important it is and how rewarding it can be.

Personal approach, like head hunting, networking.

People come expecting social ness rather than education. I don't see this as a problem, but for some people who are serious about the....

Povide manageable tasks to help committee

The best way to get volunteers is through talking one to one with people and getting a feel for what they might like to do. Perhaps coordinators could be encouraged to think about the members of their groups who might be willing to volunteer

U3a Islington suits my needs very well for the time being.

Maybe something a bit more interactive, e.g. inviting members to a meeting where they could discuss specific volunteering opps & find out a bit more about what would be required..?

personal networking

Short regular meetings to help people to communicate with each other
build a bridge between the Executive and the groups

Ask individuals to do one small thing based on your knowledge of their background and expertise. We all know that most people don't volunteer willingly!

Send a list with newsletter where volunteers are needed.

Emphasizing that coordinators are voluntary.

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D1. Any other ideas for the future, for the development of iU3A

Feeling of a common goal

I'm already a coordinator but would like someone to set up a MOTO group

We need to do more to attract an ethnic mix that better reflects NE London.

Other U3As are more like a university, with courses and lectures or led seminars. But I realise that is ambitious and might not be practical. I'm perfectly content with the existing activities available.

There is often not much expectation of education as such, which is in the constitution

We are doing well, wait for grassroots ideas

Emphasise education rather than the social aspect which is being given more and more attention it seems ... this is the university of the third age after all. And do we need to grow all the time? Sometime a period of review and reflection is good!

Reach out to other local groups, especially to attract BAME members. Ask them what subjects they would find interesting.

"To reach out to groups of people currently not using U3A, perhaps people going to talk at social gatherings in communities to talk about the benefits of joining, taking written material.

Address the subject of some people not computer literate.

I think we should definitely work on ways of appealing to a wider membership which would reflect Islington's population more accurately.

Also, from the experience of iU3A friends recently I was wondering about a group that covered health topics that affect our age group so that we could understand more, know more about what sort of help is available & also perhaps support one another. Though this may not have anything to do with the Constitution!"

I don't feel the need for us to expand any further as the monthly meetings are already over-crowded. It being London there's a useful difference between us and the Hampstead branch, so that people can take advantage of both offerings. I would not like us to try to compete with their much more didactic style. We are a group that largely do things together, by consensus; our weakness in that being that it can get cliquey, if a coordinator for instance is that way inclined.

Seems to be going in the right direction

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The ethnic mix is very poor - seems like a club for white professionals most of whom went to university. Must work harder to get a more diverse membership reflective of the community we seek to serve.

I think that considering our lack of a base and a population fast growing older doing more is impractical, to say the least. I think we are doing remarkably well.

Organize short meetings to give people the opportunity to talk to each other, to practice "small talk", so to learn the art of verbal communication, to get interested in each other....

Socialise with neighbouring groups

Not sure we need to grow much more. It feels like a very comfortable number where lots of people are getting to know each other.

I would welcome more diversity among the membership but am unsure how we could make this possible.

A better ethnic and social mix is needed to serve the community we live in

Opportunities for members to feedback on groups they are involved with as some are not run as effectively as others.

I like the flexibility and sense of informality of Islington U3A and unlike, other U3As I know about, it does not feel like being part of Adult Education classes. In my experience, the individual groups are very important and that's where you make new friends. I like the way the groups grow from people's interests and enthusiasms and there is so much to choose from.

There are a huge number of reasons why people join u3a, not only for education. But because people join often for social reasons, this perhaps means a more casual attitude to attendance, which appears thoughtless to other group members and the group leader. Perhaps an open discussion about group aims and protocols. Also we are a very middle- class, white and mainly female organisation.....don't know what to do about that one!!!
Otherwise I think we are doing well!

Increase ethnic, gender and social diversity of members. Actively encourage reluctant potential members eg reduced membership fee for people on low incomes. Otherwise I think we're doing a great job for older people in Islington.

A central meeting place we all knew about for drop ins and flexibility - more casual.

More yoga?

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If you are prepared to give us your email address please leave it here:

26 Coordinators provided there email address.