Year of Young People evaluation: young people rise



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‘Let young people shine’ was the theme of Scotland’s Year of Young People 2018, and shine they did, our evaluation report found.

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The Year of Young People National Lottery Fund

To mark the designated year, The National Lottery Heritage Fund invited young people to co-design a special grants scheme and make decisions on who should get the funding.

Caroline Clark, Director of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Scotland said: “Given that sense of ownership, young people showed us just how talented, creative, enthusiastic and resilient they are.”

Alongside the 92 heritage, community and sports projects that benefitted from funding, the young leaders flourished too:

- 91% said they felt valued
- 89% said they felt represented and influential

“We found that the positivity of involving young people in the decision-making, leadership, creation and design of a grants programme, and in helping make the projects happen, gave them a much more positive outlook on life in general,” Caroline said.

Working together

The National Lottery contributed £800,000 to set up The Year of Young People National Lottery Fund. It was administered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, sportscotland and Spirit of 2012.

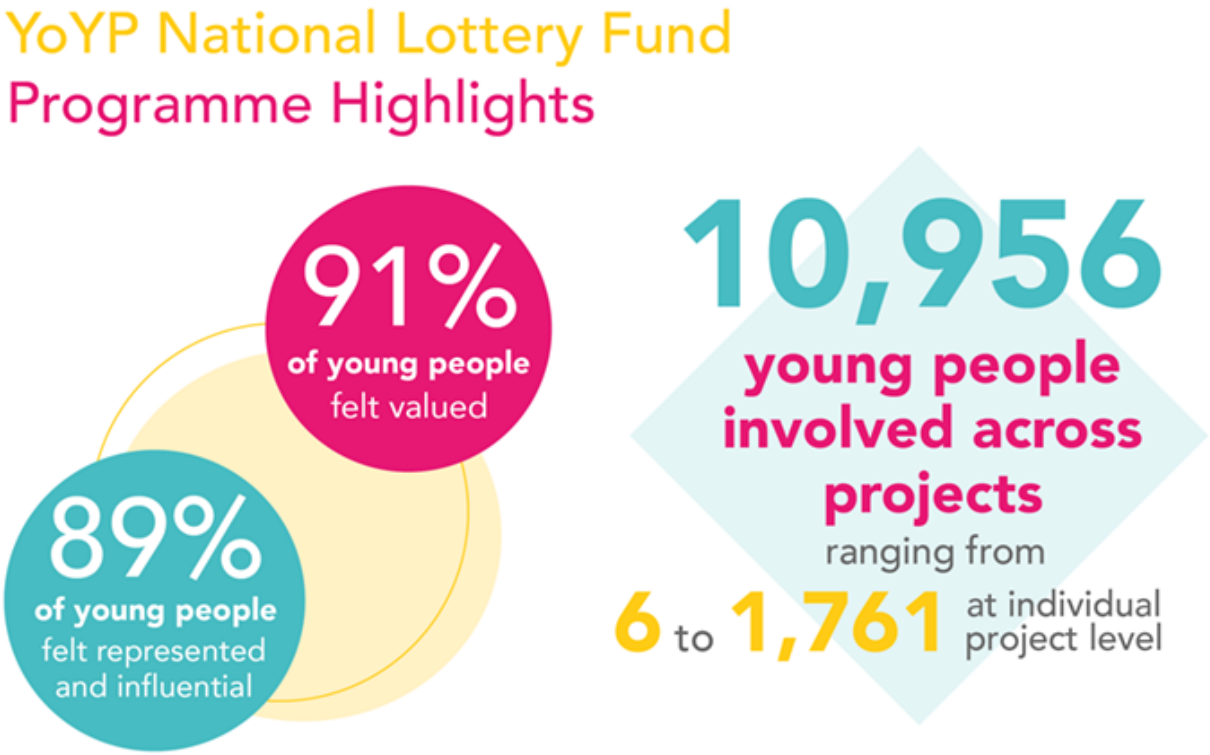
With the help from Young Scot, young people aged 8-26 co-designed what the fund would look like. They shaped its aims and guidance materials, helped promote it and encourage applications, and then made decisions on where the money was spent.

Grants ranging from £3,000-£10,000 were awarded to 92 projects – from 24 of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas – which focused on mental health and wellbeing. Activities included outdoor skills development, physical activity sessions, theatre, art and creative workshops, volunteering, heritage and history work, and events for specific marginalised groups.

Almost 11,000 young people participated in the funded activities. For our evaluation report, we commissioned Social Marketing Gateway to gather views from over 800 of them.

We found that being part of a Year of Young People project had a substantial positive impact on young people’s lives:

- 72% felt a significant increase in their general satisfaction in life
- 90% said that their levels of physical activity had improved
- the proportion of those who wished they had a different life dropped by 50%



91% of young people involved in the Year of Young People National Lottery Fund said they felt valued. 89% said they felt represented and influential.

10,956 people were involved across all the funded projects, ranging from 6 to 1,761 at individual project level.

Lessons learned

We also asked young people to share with us their advice on the most effective ways of involving them in heritage projects.

They told us:

- Involve young people from the start, in the planning and design process and let them choose the elements they want to work on.
- Adapt the project to their needs – if they're not used to sitting around a table, have planning walks instead of traditional planning meetings.
- Don't assign higher and lower level roles, as this can form a hierarchy. Instead let the young people organically adopt different roles.
- Always allow the young people to have time out if they need it.

Download the full report at the top of the page to find out more.

Case study: Belville Children’s Garden

A young man next to a tree he has planted

Tree planting at Belville Children's Garden

In Greenock, the design and creation of a children’s garden helped vulnerable and disconnected 15-19-year-olds tackle their mental health issues. In this area of multiple deprivation, on a site once dominated by high-rise flats, now plants and flowers flourish and community spirit has been re-ignited.

The young people were involved in every step of the garden’s design process, from creating mood boards to laying its concrete foundations.

One of the participants, Jake, said: “I’ve never done proper planning like this, working everything out. It felt like you were part of a proper project. There’s thinking behind it rather than just doing what you’re told.”

Working closely as a team, and making new friends, boosted the young people’s emotional wellbeing. Being involved in a project that benefitted the wider community increased the young people’s sense of pride and self-worth.

Another of the participants, Luke, said: “I definitely have more confidence being around people I don’t know.”

Belville Children’s Garden opened in spring 2020. Along the way, the project helped its young participants build confidence, self-esteem and develop new skills. Many of the young people said they intend to continue gardening and construction either for fun or pursue it as a career.

“I’ve been enjoying everything I’m doing to be honest. I’m enjoying every bit. There’s nothing better than it right now,” Luke said.