How black history is equipping young people with



H.A.I.R (Heritage Attitude Identity Respect). Credit: Leyla Webbe.

Meet two projects supporting young people to kickstart their careers, connect with their communities and take pride in their heritage.

Community: Becoming Black and British and **H.A.I.R (Heritage Attitude Identity Respect)** are bringing children and young adults together with older generations and creative practitioners to explore black heritage.

> This is power. This is history. My history.
>
> *Narrator of H.A.I.R's film, Civil Rights*

Together the projects are helping participants across England and Scotland learn new skills, build confidence and gain experience in the hard-to-break-into industries of film and performing arts.

Community: Becoming Black and British

The project

In 2024 we awarded The World Reimagined £229,026 to give young filmmakers aged between 16 and 24 the opport ore the his k and British



Some of Community: Becoming Black and British’s Leeds filming crew. Credit: The World Reimagined.

The heritage

Following the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, the UK saw the growth of many Black community organisations. Led by the children of the Windrush generation, these volunteer-run groups played a vital role in enriching UK life and empowering Black communities through the 70s, 80s and 90s.

But this heritage is at risk of being forgotten. Asher Jael, Community Developer at The World Reimagined, says: “A lot of these community organisations and spaces have since closed, often because of lack of funding. Without these documentaries, there'd be little or no evidence online that they existed.

“They were places of family, friendship and connection. For some people they meant absolute survival. They’re really cherished places full of memory. So there's something really valuable about recording that history.”



Some of the Bristol team. Credit: The World Reimagined.

The impact

Thanks to the project the young filmmakers are gaining their first credit and real industry experience in directing, handling cameras and working on a film set – something that's hard to come by.

"There are so many glass ceilings in the TV and film world," says Asher. "We had a screening of the first documentary at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton hosted by the Black Cultural Archives. To see the young people watching the film they'd made in the cinema, to see them recognise their own abilities and take such pride in their work, was a beautiful moment."

Alongside professional connections, participants are also gaining a deeper connection to their heritage and communities.

"In our day-to-day lives, outside of families, we might not engage with people from other generations. For younger people to have these conversations and to realise how much they have in common with their elders is so important."

H.A.I.R (Heritage Attitude Identity Respect)

The project

Edinburgh International Jazz & Blues Festival's two-year project – which we awarded £80,000 in 2023 – worked with children and young people from the city's diverse communities to celebrate the political, social and cultural heritage of Black hair. Supported by freelance artists, participants produced carnival costumes, dances , graphic novels and short films inspired by Black hairstyles.

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Renais



Participants shared their work at a showcase event. Credit: Leyla Webbe.

The heritage

As the narrator of the project's film on the civil rights era says: "This isn't just hair. This is power. This is history. My history."

As well as developing heritage and creative skills, young participants connected with older generations who passed down knowledge and techniques for styling and caring for Black hair.

Giles Agis, Carnival and Community Manager at Edinburgh Festival Carnival, believes that living heritage like this is particularly powerful for engaging young audiences: "It's really important that young people have access to intangible cultural heritage. It's valuable because it's about something that grows and changes."

The impact

Rianna Andrews, Project Co-ordinator, says: "The impact has been huge. There aren't enough opportunities for us to speak about our hair and to feel pride in it for ourselves.

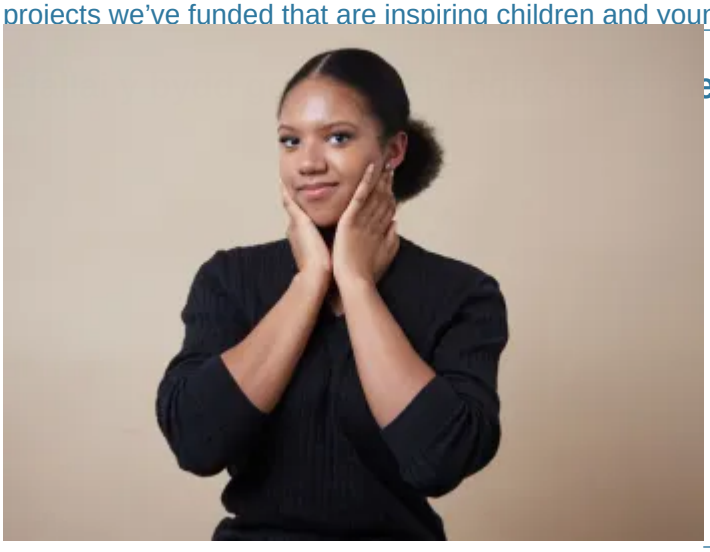


For some participants the showcase was their first time performing on stage. Credit: Leyla Webbe.

“The project is also a way of educating others and helping young people feel confident to do so.

“Having the chance to work with the freelancers, gain experience in creative fields and to take a lead on the decision making has made a huge difference. It's not often that you get those opportunities, as a young person. It was lovely to see how proud they felt in the work they produced. Their confidence grew tenfold.”

Watch the films on The World Reimagined and Edinburgh Festival Carnival’s YouTube channels and discover more projects we’ve funded that are inspiring children and young people to get involved in heritage.



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How to engage young and diverse audiences with your archives



Echoes in the Present, Larry Amponsah in Leeds



OMOS performers at Stirling Castle. Photo: Washington Gwande

Black heritage, performance and Shakespeare in Scotland