HLF calls for Birmingham's youth to help preserve



The Style Africa project

The 'Route2Roots' campaign, being run by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Youth Engagement Agency Beatfreeks, encourages 11-25 year olds to discover their past and think about the history of things and places that are important to them.

As one of the youngest and most diverse cities in Europe, with nearly 40% of the population under 25, Birmingham is being used as a test-bed by HLF to pioneer a new approach to getting young people interested in heritage.

Several films featuring the campaign's brand ambassadors and created by young people working on the campaign have already been released online and Brummies are sharing their ideas about what makes the city's heritage special using the hashtag #Routes2Roots.

Those with ideas for projects investigating a part of Birmingham's history will be encouraged to join with organisations and apply to HLF's Young Roots programme which offers grants of between £10,000 and £50,000.

Reyahn King, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, said: "Heritage shapes who we are, binds communities together and provides the context for understanding modern life. Young people will look after our important heritage in the future so it's vital that we help them discover why and how it matters now."

“We have funding available for heritage projects led by young people so do get in touch with your ideas and we’ll help you through the application process.”

The campaign will officially launch with a heritage ‘expo’ event at the newly opened Impact Hub in Birmingham on 10 September from 4pm to 7pm. This event, part of Birmingham History Week, will bring together young people, heritage organisations and youth groups to meet and enjoy talks, live performances and idea-generating sessions.

Anisa Haghdadi, Founder and CEO of Beatfreeks, said: “It's fantastic to see young people are motivated to explore and discover new roots into their heritage. With changes economically, politically and environmentally, it's encouraging that young people are looking at their heritage and history to figure out the future. This is a great time to be celebrating the skills, creativity and curiosity of young people through the #Routes2Roots campaign and beyond."

In 2012, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (BMAG) and Birmingham City University received a £21,200 Young Roots grant for their ‘Style Africa’ project. Young people explored the museum’s West African textile collection and curated an exhibition to display the extensive range of materials to the public for the first time.

Abbey Andersen, one of the young participants involved, said: “By working on a project, you can learn a huge range of skills from film-making to event planning, helping you to get valuable experience for your CV.”

Other organisations that have benefitted from National Lottery funding via the Young Roots programme include the Midlands Actors Theatre who discovered the history of New Street Station and Recre8, a company who use drama and psychology to help vulnerable young people, who explored gangs and gang culture in Birmingham over the last 100 years.

For more information or to get involved as a partner or participant; see the Routes2Roots page on the Beatfreeks website.

Further information

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New youth heritage campaign 'Routes2Roots' launches