

A Toolkit for Meaningful Engagement with Young People in the Heritage Sector

Briege Nugent and
Media Education 2022

Introduction and Overview

This Toolkit contains three documents which explore best practice when working with young people in museums and the wider heritage sector. These are -

1. Meaningful Best Practice and Outcomes Report compiled as part of the Scotland 365 youth engagement project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Kick the Dust programme, to engage young people in heritage (Nugent and Media Education, 2022).
2. National Museums Scotland (NMS) Toolkit For Working with Young People in Museums inspired by Scotland Creates : A Sense of Place (NMS, 2017).
3. Appendix: A Literature Review compiled as part of the Scotland 365 youth engagement project (Nugent and Media Education 2022).

Together these documents demonstrate part of the history of NMS in their research into what constitutes meaningful youth engagement in the heritage sector and how this can be implemented today. The Toolkit, created by NMS in 2017, documents the learning gained during Scotland Creates : A Sense of Place. The recommendations listed in the Meaningful Best Practice and Outcomes Report build on this learning and summarises the findings gained through the Scotland 365 Project and the wider literature review. The two documents compliment each other and provide a comprehensive tool for understanding the factors which need to be considered in meaningful youth engagement in the heritage sector today. Together they provide practical tools and tips for moving forward. The literature review, included in the appendix, provides analysis of key documents available at the time of publication and useful references for further reading and research.

Meaningful Youth Engagement: Best Practice and Outcomes for National Museums Scotland (NMS)

Background and Overview

This report was commissioned as part of the legacy of the Scotland 365 youth engagement project, funded by NLHF's Kick the Dust programme, to engage young people in heritage. The project was delivered across 2018 – 2022 in two parts, pre and post Covid. During this time members of the Scotland 365 team at NMS worked with many project partners and a Youth Engagement Team (YET) of young people. This report summarises the learning from this project and the work of the YET from 2020 - 2022. It also draws on many other sources, namely -

- The summarised learning from the work of Media Education with members of the YET in planning and delivering a series of sector sharing events to explore the findings of the Scotland 365 Project.
- The recommendations produced by the YET team
- The Evaluation Reports produced by Research Scotland with 3 young evaluators as part of the 365 Scotland Project.

- NMS Toolkit For Working with Young People in Museums inspired by Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place.
- A review of wider evidence from the sector.

Our Brief

Our brief included conducting a literature review of existing learning across the heritage sector in best practices in youth engagement. Alongside this, we worked with members of the YET to plan and deliver a series of sector sharing workshops for NMS and heritage sector staff and partners in order to explore the key themes and learning from the Scotland 365 project.

The Process and Findings

Much of the learning detailed in this report was informed by the dedicated work of the YET from 2020 - 2022. Part of their work involved researching best practice across the heritage sector, and this resulted in the YET compiling their findings under 5 key areas -

- Reach and Accessibility
- Social Space
- Youth Community
- Career Development
- Institutional Change

Media Education and the YET worked together and used these 5 key areas to create film resources to present some of the YET's recommendations. These films were then used as conversation starters as part of the three workshop events that were also planned and delivered together. Comprehensive summaries of the discussions that took place were produced. These discussions celebrated existing best practice, explored the ambitions of the sector for youth engagement, looked at existing barriers and challenges to implementing change and explored ways these might be overcome.

Summary of findings from the Sector Sharing Events

It is important to state that it was clear that there was already good work taking place in youth engagement across the sector, strong partnerships between organisations had been developed and many staff were committed to youth engagement and promoting greater diversity amongst the young people the sector reached. Participants at the workshop events felt that institutional change should not be confined as a long-term goal, but instead could begin now in part through the dissemination of the learning from

Scotland 365. It was recognised that more staff training and development was required and clearly defined roles and responsibilities around promoting and supporting youth engagement should be established. Ideally, it was felt that youth engagement should be a consideration for all staff. Many participants requested more permission and support to spend the time needed to develop stronger relationships with partners and young people to take work in this area forward. It was felt that the sector needed to widen partnerships and a commitment from senior management was needed to embed meaningful youth engagement now and in the future. It was also felt that youth engagement required a cultural shift to recognise it is a learning process and the approach taken needs to be less risk averse. Evaluation and reflection as part of the process of implementing change was viewed as being essential, so that mistakes that may be made on the way can be learned from. It was felt that organisations needed to be less scared to test new and innovative ways of doing things and that, if they were able to do this, the potential for the future of youth engagement and its impact across the sector was really exciting. These findings and others are included in the recommendations detailed in this report.

Recommendations

In order to ensure young people's voices are at the heart of this study, the recommendations detailed below have been ordered into the five key areas the YET felt were important for NMS and the heritage sector to focus on.

Reach and Accessibility

- Make this fun! E.g. Social Time, Escape Room, changing exhibitions that are relevant, that young people can see themselves represented, it is interactive and creative (MacMilan, 2022; NMS, 2017; Baurley and Younan 2021; Impact Arts 2020; Morrison, 2019; Sherbert Research 2019, Madgin et al, 2016; Icarus, 2015; Heritage Lottery Fund, 2013;).
- Make this mutually beneficial, being clear about the skills being developed (Young Scot, 2022; NMS, 2017).
- Make sufficient time within project timescales to build relationships (Young Scot, 2022).
- Ideally, get young people engaging as early as possible (MacMilan, 2022).
- Get out there – Bring the museum to young people, doing outreach work at schools, youth groups, linking in with other organisations, extending reach as far as possible to let them know about the opportunities and how to get involved. This also means that staff need to have flexibility with working hours so that it 'fits' with young people's lives.
- Have a key contact – having a consistent 'friendly face' that is experienced and passionate about youth engagement to encourage young people to take part (NMS, 2017; Heritage Lottery Fund, 2013).

- Address practical barriers such as travel costs involved for those attending. 'Do not assume all participants are confident, independent travellers', support them by planning ahead (NMS, 2017).
- Work in partnership with other organisations and schools to widen participation, opportunities for creativity and promote pastoral support (MacMilan, 2022; NMS, 2017).

Social Space

- Give young people a safe physical space that they can meet and feel welcomed and also a space for them to showcase their work, should they want to (Sherbert Research 2019).
- Listen to the young people and take them seriously. Be open to critique.
- Make engagement meaningful and be person centred – find out what young people want to do as individuals as well as a group and help them connect to these opportunities. Also ask them how they want to be defined and how the process goes, for example, do they or don't they want food to be a part of this? (NMS, 2017).
- Don't decide from the outset what the outcome will be and instead promote co-production, letting young people take the lead (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2013), and be transparent in funding bids about this.

Career Development

- Involve young people in the planning and development of the project (NMS, 2017), ideally co-designing this together.
- Educate young people about pathways to employment in the sector and be honest about the challenges.
- Recognise wider transferable skills applicants might have.
- Give and support young people the opportunity to take on responsibilities with activities such as for example organising an exhibition e.g. budgeting.
- Think through follow-on opportunities and create diverse pathways for engagement, for example from voluntary groups, to paid opportunities and alumni programmes (MacMilan, 2022).
- Young people can have complex issues and staff would benefit from ongoing training and support in this area (Impact Arts, 2020; Icarus, 2015).

Youth Community

- Implement a youth committee developed with young people steering the direction and development of the work (Young Scot, 2022).
- Offer a hybrid model of engagement, with face-to-face as well as digital communication available, widening participation.

- Make sure engagement is not tokenistic by letting young people lead on decision-making, give autonomy.
- Give young people time to socialise! They like meeting others like them!

Institutional Change

- Develop a clear lead or leads for youth engagement - young people need champions that believe in them and can help them be heard (MacMilan, 2022).
- Challenge procurement to change processes to pay young people fairly where these opportunities arise.
- Link in with other organisations to broaden the audience.
- Have youth voice represented at every level if possible to inform decision making, including at Board level (Young Scot, 2022; MacMilan, 2022).
- Ensure senior management are committed to meaningful youth engagement.
- It was felt strongly that throughout it is important to reflect and learn from developments, putting youth voice central, and this pointed towards the need for external evaluation on an ongoing basis.
- Embed a culture of openness and challenge ideas within the institution and the wider sector, to further enhance the voice of previously

underrepresented groups and promote diversity, to dissolve as many social, economic and cultural barriers as possible (Young Scot, 2022).

References

Baurley, J. and Younan, S. (2021) Youth and Community Engagement at the Amgueddfa Cymru- National Museum Wales. In Eid, H. and Forstrom, M. (Eds.) Museum Innovation: Building More Equitable, Relevant and Impactful Museums. Oxon: Routledge.

Heritage Lottery Fund (2013) How to involve young people in heritage projects. Available online at: https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/guidance/young_people_good_practice.pdf or <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/2888/hlf-how-to-involve-young-people-in-heritage-projects.pdf>

Icarus (2015) Young people and the heritage sector. Available online at: https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/young_people_and_heritage_sector_icarus-report-accessible-2.pdf

Impact Arts (2020) A Report on Cashback to the Future's contribution to National Museum of Scotland's "Scotland 365" Project, part of Kick the Dust. Glasgow: Impact Arts.

MacMilan, K. (2022) Evaluation of Scotland 365. Edinburgh: Research Scotland.

Madgin, R. Webb, D. Ruiz, P. Snelson, T. (2016) Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage: Time, Place and Communication. Available online at at: [http://www.ycmh.co.uk/pdf/HLF%20Report_Final%5B1%5D%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ycmh.co.uk/pdf/HLF%20Report_Final%5B1%5D%20(1).pdf)

Morrison, J. (2019) Are heritage attractions doing enough to attract young visitors? Available online at at: <https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/supplier-news/heritage-attractions-enough-attract-young-visitors/>

Sherbert Research (2019) Young people (16-25s) in Scotland: Engagement with heritage and museums. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland

National Museums Scotland (2017) Tool-kit for working with young people in museums. Available online at: <https://www.nms.ac.uk/media/353536/sc-toolkit-final.pdf>

Young Scot (2022) S365 Youth Engagement Recommendations. Edinburgh: Young Scot.

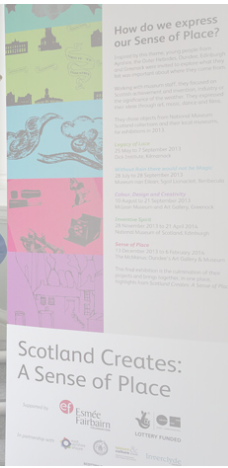
Tool-kit for working with young people in museums



Inspired by *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place*,
a project supported by



Young people from the Scotland Creates project team



Toolkit at a glance

This Toolkit contains information, hints and tips on working with young people in museums.

It draws on the experience of a two year national project, *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place* led by the National Museum of Scotland. This project shows how museums can provide young adults with positive personal, cultural and learning experiences, develop their creativity and improve their life skills. Staff from four museums across Scotland worked with National Museums Scotland, creative organisations and young adults, to create dynamic gallery interventions and exhibitions.

To find out more about *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place* see www.nms.ac.uk/scotlandcreates

1. Hints & Tips
2. What is *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place*?
3. Working with young adults
4. Creative partners and young adults
5. Museum objects as inspiration
6. *Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place* case studies from:
 - The Dick Institute, East Ayrshire Council
 - Museum nan Eilean, Benbecula and Stornoway, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 - The McLean Museum & Art Gallery, Inverclyde Council
 - The National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
 - The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum
7. Engaging vulnerable young people



Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place exhibition at National Museum of Scotland





Young people attending the
Legacy of Lace opening event

1. Hints & Tips

How do you recruit and retain young adults?

Be clear about what you can offer your young people: what will they get out of working with you? Use targeted approaches to youth theatre groups, volunteer centres or creative subject teachers. Word of mouth is good: flyers and posters in public spaces can be less successful.

They are NOT all the same

We struggled to find a way of describing the 16-24 age range. The *Scotland Creates* participants told us: 'Don't call us young people!' So, we use 'young people' and 'young adults' interchangeably in this Toolkit. Ask your participants what *they* want to be called, how *they* want to define themselves.

...it's not all about cake!

Opinion is divided on this. Some people have run very successful youth engagement projects where regular intake of cake was vital, or going for pizza to celebrate the end of a project. Some young people have special dietary requirements, allergies or conditions that can be aggravated by the wrong sort of

food. Some young people don't like to eat in front of others. Do not assume 'buy cake, they will come' when working with young people. ASK them what (and when) they like to eat. Be prepared to use petty cash so they can buy their own food for meetings.

Establish mutual respect

Agree what it is that you want to do, together – and stick to it. Keep your project plan or activity simple, informal and achievable. Milestones or targets help everyone look forward to the next step and back to see what's been achieved. If something goes wrong or cannot be achieved – be honest, explain why, talk it through and learn from the experience.

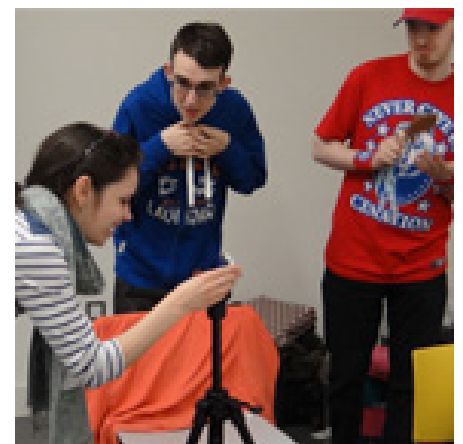
A friendly face

If it is possible, have the same friendly person (or people) facilitating for the duration of the project or activity. It makes a big difference to the dynamics and flow of the project and encourages the young people to stick with it.

Shout about it

Don't wait until the final outcome of your project or activity to tell people what you are doing. Ask your young people to write a Blog, post on Facebook, tweet on Twitter, upload photos on Flickr or wherever they are comfortable communicating. *Scotland Creates* young adults blogged, wrote *Object of the Month* web content and made digital films about their local museum and posted these online as part of a 'viral' marketing campaign.

bit.ly/scotlandcreatesblog
www.nms.ac.uk/museumvirals



Scotland Creates digital film workshop





Museum Takeover Day 'Flashmob'
at National Museum of Scotland

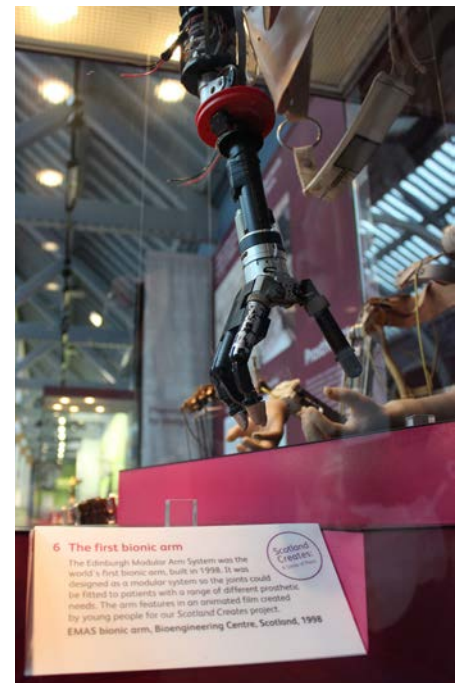
2. What is *Scotland Creates:* *A Sense of Place?*

A two year, national project involving young people, creative organisations and five partner museums across Scotland:

1. The Dick Institute, East Ayrshire Council
2. Museum nan Eilean, Benbecula and Stornoway, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
3. The McLean Museum & Art Gallery, Inverclyde Council
4. The National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh
5. The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum

- A collaborative creative response to national and local museum collections, taking the theme 'Sense of Place' to create gallery interventions, exhibitions, dance, music and films with a local connection.
- An opportunity for the partner museums to learn from each other, working with young adults, to re-interpret their collections.
- A unique partnership project generously supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Creative Scotland that increased capacity across the partner museums.

For more information go to
www.nms.ac.uk/scotlandcreates



Gallery intervention at National Museum of Scotland





Greenock Wanderers Under 16
rugby team

3. Working with young adults

How do you find and reach young adults?

If you have never worked with young adults in your museum before, this is the first question you will ask.

“Young people are entering an increasingly competitive labour market and it is more important than ever that they can compete by having the necessary skills and experience to find and sustain employment.” (Impact Arts, Working with Young People)



Participants visit the museum store

Start by thinking about what *they* will gain from being involved, e.g.

- new skills and experience to help them find jobs.
- social aspect – meeting and making new friends.
- personal development, building self-confidence.
- creative outlet.

Include these in your project aims and in your communication with young people.

For *Scotland Creates*, we:

- contacted local volunteer centres that support young adults to gain practical experience before moving into work or further study.
- emailed museum staff, colleagues in other organisations or local authority to raise awareness of the project and opportunities for young people.
- contacted young people already or previously involved with us. Word of mouth is often a very successful way of reaching new contacts.

- made direct contact with creative subject teachers (e.g. art, drama, dance, music), youth leaders and other facilitators at local secondary schools, art centres, theatre groups, groups for excluded pupils and staff at local colleges.
- put information on Facebook and other social media with a named contact at the museum – young adults are not necessarily using these sites but parents, teachers, youth workers will pass information on.

Do not be discouraged if, at first, you don't succeed OR if you attract small numbers.





Greenock Wanderers Under 16
rugby team

3. Working with young adults

Your second question will probably be: how do I motivate and retain them?

"Groups work best when there is a mixture of personalities, abilities, genders, ethnicities and individual experiences." (Impact Arts, Working with Young People)

Involve young people in the planning and development of the project. At the National Museum of Scotland, young people were part of the recruitment process for the *Scotland Creates* Project Officer and also interviewed animators for our film project.

Create a safe, supportive and positive learning experience and environment. All ideas should be welcomed and participants not judged or compared. Everyone can learn from other participants' ideas, experience and suggestions. No one person should dominate the group sessions (and this includes the facilitator!), everyone should have a chance to be heard. This requires skilful management, diplomacy and

understanding different personality types. Play to the strengths across the group.

Some things that can help are:

- have a consistent, key contact person throughout the project: participants get to know who they are going to work with each time they meet.
- have a structure: plan workshops and activities so that the participants know what they are going to be doing, when and where.
- allow enough time for discussion and group consensus: remember, some young people may not have taken part in formal meetings or discussions before and may not be used to being asked their opinion.

Getting out and about

Unless your young participants live within walking distance of your museum, they will probably need to travel to you by public transport. You may also want to take them or send them to look at other museums, galleries or places of inspiration and interest.

Do not assume that all participants are confident, independent travellers or are even familiar with their own town or city. Support them by planning ahead, involve them in decisions about how to travel, checking timetables and buying tickets. They may need or want someone to travel with them, e.g. a friend, parent, guardian or other adult.



Group visit to
The Roslin Institute





© Mike Scott

East Ayrshire Youth Theatre
with Scottish Ballet

4. Creative partners and young adults

Having a creative partner in place from the outset can be an added attractor for young people joining or staying with your project.

Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Creative Scotland, with the specific aim of working in partnership across museums, with young adults and creative organisations.

Look at your creative partners' aims and objectives – do these fit with your young adult project? Is the creative partner already working with this audience or are they also looking to develop their work with young people? Do they have a database of young people or youth organisations that they are willing to share or contact with details of your project?

Young people can be involved in the creative partner selection process, researching artists or organisations to work with. The *Scotland Creates* group at the National Museum of Scotland were interested in film making and stop frame animation.

They researched animators and with help from museum staff, organised a tendering process. One of the young adults was on the interview panel for the selection of the animator, asking specific questions on behalf of the young volunteers.

Creative input to *Scotland Creates* included:

- film-making workshops at The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, using iPads and smartphones, taking inspiration from Dundee's scientific, engineering and photographic heritage
- stop frame animation workshops at the National Museum of Scotland to create short films about scientific inventions or innovations developed in Edinburgh
- music and song writing workshops at Sgoil Lionacleit, Benbecula and National Museum of Scotland arranged by Live Music Now! Scotland with members of Skerryvore and Miniature Dinosaurs.

- Scottish Ballet dance workshops with young rugby players inspired by Clyde Pottery objects for the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock
- Scottish Ballet dance workshops with the local youth theatre group, inspired by Ayrshire lace production, for The Dick Institute, Kilmarnock



Songwriting workshop with Miniature Dinosaurs



Dundee Youth Action Group filming with Smallpetitklein Dance Company





Bethany and Ruairidh from Museum nan Eilean with a sunshine recorder

5. Museum objects as inspiration

If possible let young adults make their own object selection for their project.

For *Scotland Creates*, we had a theme (*Sense of Place*) and collections (Science & Technology, Art & Design) which our funders approved before we had recruited our young participants.

A visit behind-the-scenes to the museum store can stimulate ideas, discussion and questions about the objects, conservation and collections care. Museum staff could bring selected objects out of store, or work with photographs or online collections database.

Document this part of your project: ask your young volunteers to take photographs or write a Blog for your website about the objects they have chosen, or describe their day in the museum store or with Conservation. *Scotland Creates* generated 10 blogs and *Object of the Month* articles for the National Museums Scotland website. The objects inspired film-making, dance, song writing, art work and creative writing.



A visit to National Museums Collection Centre with a curator from the Science & Technology department



Ruairidh from Museum nan Eilean with James Clerk Maxwell's Dynamic Top



Aileen from National Museum of Scotland with Dolly the Sheep's death mask



The Prepare for Work and Study Group create their own exhibition





© Mike Scott

*Legacy of Lace exhibition
at The Dick Institute*

6. Case studies

Case Study 1: The Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire Leisure

Creative Partners: Scottish Ballet and MYB Textiles

The Dick Institute team recruited their participants through local secondary school drama departments, who encouraged pupils to attend the first meetings for *Scotland Creates*. Being part of East Ayrshire Leisure, the team were also able to invite East Ayrshire Youth Theatre to dance workshops with Scottish Ballet.

The East Ayrshire participants and museum staff chose *Legacy of Lace* as their *Sense of Place* theme, focusing on the historic and contemporary lace-making industry in Ayrshire. They borrowed three Ayrshire lace pieces from National Museums Scotland, to exhibit with objects from their own collections and contemporary lace pieces.

Activities undertaken by the East Ayrshire participants included:

- guided tour of the lace production stages at MYB Textiles factory
- with artist Gemma Coyle and MYB Textiles, designed and produced a lace screen featuring local places and industries in Kilmarnock
- research into lace-inspired high street fashion and interior designs, which were then included in their final exhibition at The Dick Institute
- object handling and collections care sessions with the Museum Officer; installation of the exhibition
- writing text and exhibition layout planning
- Scottish Ballet dance workshops and final performance at exhibition opening
- design and production of lace accessories for dancers

- planning, marketing and delivering a Big Craft Giveaway event in Kilmarnock
- attending digital film-making workshops in Edinburgh and creating a viral film inspired by poet, Rabbie (Robert) Burns, using an online rap



© Mike Scott

Dance performance with Scottish Ballet



© Mike Scott

*Lace room panel made by MYB Textiles
for The Dick Institute*





© Mike Scott

*Legacy of Lace exhibition
at The Dick Institute*

6. Case studies

Case Study 1: Samantha and Scott

Samantha (Sam) and Scott, senior secondary school pupils in Kilmarnock, found out about *Scotland Creates* from their drama teacher. Over the course of the project they were involved in creating the lace panel and planning their exhibition at The Dick Institute. They participated in project meetings and digital film workshops at the National Museum of Scotland. They then planned, directed and filmed their viral film 'Rappy Burns', persuading some of their friends to play costumed characters in the film.

Participating in *Scotland Creates*, Sam and Scott made useful connections with museum staff and developed a strong interest in museum work. At the end of the project, they both entered further education and volunteered at the National Museum of Rural Life, East Kilbride.

"They thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of performing in a Museum/Exhibition space, and valued the process of looking at a piece of art and bringing it to life through the medium of dance."

Michaela, Youth Theatre group leader

"I feel the young people benefited greatly from this project. I could see their confidence build and their interests in different areas grow."

Gemma, artist in residence



Sam and Scott at National Museum of Scotland



Sam and Scott with their lace display at National Museum of Scotland





Zoe, Bethany and Ruairidh from Museum nan Eilean

6. Case studies

Case Study 2: Museum nan Eilean, Benbecula and Stornoway, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Creative Partners: Live Music Now! Scotland, Skerryvore and Dance tutor Rosalind Masson

Museum nan Eilean operates from two sites in the Western Isles: inside Sgoil Lionacleit (secondary school), Liniclate on the island of Benbecula and at Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis. Young people were recruited through contacts that the museums staff already had at Sgoil Lionacleit and through email round the local authority (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) network.

The Western Isles participants and museum staff chose 'weather' as their *Sense of Place* theme for their exhibition *A Reir na h-Aimsir* (*Without Rain there would not be Magic*), focusing on the impact the weather has on every aspect of island life. They borrowed ten weather instruments from National Museums Scotland,

together with a Harris tweed suit designed by Vivienne Westwood, representing traditional textiles with contemporary fashion design.

Activities undertaken by the Western Isles participants included:

- working with the Museums Development Officer to plan and install their exhibition at Sgoil Lionacleit, using Skype to include a young volunteer attending the University of Edinburgh
- selecting objects and writing exhibition text
- creating a Harris tweed collage, inspired by the weather-related proverb 'Red Sky at Night, Shepherd's Delight'
- gathering over two hundred images depicting the changing weather and landscape of the islands
- designing exhibition posters and invitations
- creative writing in English and Gaelic to tell weather stories through prose and poetry

- song writing workshops with the band, Skerryvore (Live Music Now!) to create piece, *Where I Want to Stay*, inspired by the weather
- dance workshops in Benbecula and Stornoway
- Big Craft Giveaway workshops in both locations using tweed off cuts
- writing an *Object of the Month* article for the National Museums Scotland website: Vivienne Westwood Harris tweed suit
- attending digital film-making workshops in Edinburgh and creating a viral film 'Do you dare visit?' to promote the new Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway



Song-writing workshop with Skerryvore





Zoe, Bethany and Ruairidh from Museum nan Eilean

6. Case studies

Case Study 2: Zoe, Bethany and Ruairidh

Bethany attended Sgoil Lionacleit, Benbecula and heard about *Scotland Creates* from the Museum Development Officer. Interested in exhibition design, Bethany worked with the officer to plan all stages of the exhibition and organised the call out, via social media, for weather images. Studying in Edinburgh, Bethany continued to be involved, Skyping with the other volunteers and staff who were in the museum to install the exhibition. She also joined the Edinburgh *Scotland Creates* group and helped with the final exhibition installation there. At the end of the project, Bethany had applied for postgraduate Museum Studies.

Ruairidh is from Ness, in the very north of the Western Isles and undertook a considerable amount of travel to take part in *Scotland Creates* on the islands and the mainland. Ruairidh heard about the project from a relative who saw the museum's email. Interested in developing his graphic design skills, Ruairidh worked on some of the promotional material for the exhibition. He took part in a Museums Galleries Scotland/Creative Scotland *Insights Café* panel discussion in Edinburgh, speaking to an audience of around 30 museums, galleries and youth sector delegates. At the end of *Scotland Creates*, Ruairidh is now looking into other training and work options including art, design and film-making.

Zoe attended the digital film workshops in Edinburgh with Ruairidh and together they created their viral film, 'Do you dare visit?', inspired by the 'Blair Witch Project'.



Ruairidh with the poster he designed for the exhibition at Museum nan Eilean



Preparing for the exhibition at Museum nan Eilean





Exhibition launch at the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, August 2013

6. Case studies

Case study 3: McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, Inverclyde Council

Creative Partner: Scottish Ballet

Young volunteers were already working at the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, one as a guide and one in archives, when *Scotland Creates* got underway and were able to take part in the project. Other young people were recruited through the Greenock Volunteer Centre and local college.

The McLean holds a significant collection of Clyde Pottery Company ceramics and although the Greenock factory closed in 1905, many local people still treasure objects as family heirlooms. The young people from Greenock chose pieces of Clyde Pottery from the collections at the National Museum of Scotland and the McLean for their *Colour, Design and Creativity* exhibition.

Activities undertaken by the Greenock participants included:

- researching and writing exhibition text
- photographing objects for the exhibition graphics and museum database
- design and production of coasters and magnets inspired by Clyde Pottery ceramic designs, for sale in the museum shop
- designing posters and flyers to promote the exhibition including creating line drawings
- writing a Blog for National Museums Scotland: the McNab (Clyde Pottery Co) plaque
- attending digital film-making workshops in Edinburgh and creating a viral film, 'Bringing the past to life!', using 'Morfo' software

Scottish Ballet were the creative partner with the McLean Museum and Art Gallery. They worked with Greenock Wanderers Under 16 rugby team on a series of dance workshops inspired by the movements of workers in the pottery industry. A film of their work and final performance was included in the *Scotland Creates* exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland.



Greenock Wanderers Under 16 rugby team



Coasters inspired by Clyde pottery ceramic designs





Exhibition launch at the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, August 2013

6. Case studies

Case study 3: Paul

Paul was already volunteering at the McLean Museum and Art Gallery. He has a particular interest in photography and worked with a professional museum photographer to learn about handling and photographing museum objects. He took part in the two day digital film workshops in Edinburgh and created a viral film to promote the museum which used the 'Morfo' online app to animate objects from the McLean Museum and Art Gallery collections. Paul has dyspraxia, a learning disability and has benefited greatly from *Scotland Creates*. With support from the museum curator, he travelled to Edinburgh to meet some of the other *Scotland Creates* volunteers. He was interviewed for a Museums Journal feature 'Why I Volunteer' and, at the end of *Scotland Creates* was hoping to work in media, photography and the arts.

Paul was one of five young people involved with *Scotland Creates* as the core team at the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, with others involved through work or student placements.

"I really enjoyed the chance to get 'hands-on' with local history and think about how it was being presented in a visual way."

Laura

"Practical skills gained through projects like this are useful to everyone and provide good experience for further training or employment."

Laura

"I enjoyed meeting other volunteers too. We interviewed each other about the things we like about museums, but also the sorts of things that put us off."

Paul



Paul (and camera) with the Bells Up Brass Quintet



Magnets and coasters designed by participants on sale in the McLean Museum and Art Gallery shop





Gallery intervention featuring
Dolly the Sheep

6. Case studies

Case Study 4: National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Creative Partners: Cameron Duguid animator, Live Music Now! Scotland

As the lead partner in *Scotland Creates*, National Museums Scotland appointed a Project Officer to recruit the Edinburgh young volunteers and to co-ordinate and support activities across the partner museums. The Project Officer contacted the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre, the City Council's Community Learning and Development team and visited community groups across Edinburgh to find participants. A core group of 5-6 young people met regularly throughout the project, with senior school work placements, a Project Scotland youth placement and a student placement (postgraduate Community Education) joining the team in year 1 to make a creative response to three objects in the Science & Technology galleries. These were Dolly, the first cloned mammal (sheep), the world's first

bionic arm and the dynamic top, invented by Edinburgh physicist, James Clerk Maxwell.

Activities undertaken by the Edinburgh participants included:

- meeting National Museums Scotland staff from various departments to find out about collections and learn about the processes involved in creating an exhibition
- choosing their objects and theme for their creative response in the galleries
- appointing and working with a film-maker to script and create three animated films about their chosen Science & Technology objects
- research visits to: The Roslin Institute (Dolly the Sheep), the historic home of James Clerk Maxwell (dynamic top) and Touch Bionics (i-limbs, bionic arm)
- organising and participating in Museum Takeover Day, including launch event for their animated films, a dance 'flashmob', science shows, taking over the Info Zone (library) and song writing workshops and performance with band Miniature Dinosaurs (Live Music Now! Scotland)
- writing a Blog for National Museums Scotland: the official Edinburgh Opening bit.ly/scotlandcreatesopening
- taking part in the installation of the final exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland
- delivered a guided tour for museum staff, of the final year 2 exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland
- visitor surveys and evaluation of the year 2 exhibition in Edinburgh
- attending digital film-making workshops in Edinburgh and creating a viral film 'Not your average date' for the National Museum of Scotland





Gallery intervention featuring
Dolly the Sheep

6. Case studies

Case study 4: Aileen, Callum and Sam

Aileen, a photography graduate, credits her involvement with *Scotland Creates* in helping her to secure a full time job in a local library. For *Scotland Creates*, Aileen took on a research role finding out more about the objects, visiting the museum stores and wrote an *Object of the Month* article. She also helped photograph the objects, scripted the Bionic Arm film and helped the wider group animate the films. Aileen took part in the viral film workshops and helped make the film 'Not your average date', she helped install the final exhibition in Edinburgh and gathered visitor evaluation.

Callum and Sam have additional learning support needs; Sam attends a local college and both are interested in film, media and gaming. They both attended all *Scotland Creates* project sessions from the outset, including making the three animated films for National Museums Scotland, going on research trips, volunteered at

Museum events and took part in the viral film workshops. At the end of *Scotland Creates* Sam planned to do a further college course and Callum lined up a Project Search placement.

"It was an amazing sight, seeing all the ideas that we started with come together to create something awesome."

Sam

"The project has benefited me because of learning more about it and doing animation because I've never done animation before."

Hannah

"Working with professional equipment is also quite nice because it gives you an idea of what you can actually do when there are no limits."

Sam



Aileen, Sam and Callum with their objects



Sam watching the films he helped to create





Project wall by Youth Action Group (YAG)

6. Case studies

Case study 5: The McManus, Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, Leisure and Culture Dundee

Creative Partners:
Smallpetitklein dance company
and 2 artist facilitators

The McManus was the only project partner museum with an established group: the Youth Action Group (YAG). YAG and museum staff chose four 19th century scientific, lens-based objects from the National Museum of Scotland that were made or sold in Dundee, by George Lowdon, Peter Airth Feathers and his son, Peter Feathers, a pioneer of early photography and film.

YAG used digital technology to make their own films, which echo those made by Feathers and created a gallery intervention and installation at The McManus.

Activities undertaken by the Youth Action Group included:

- researching the lives of Peter Feathers and George Lowdon and finding places in Dundee connected with their lives
- getting out and about around Dundee filming to 'locate themselves' in the historic and cultural narratives of the city
- interviewing Dundonian actor Brian Cox and producing creative writing which he voiced for a digital film
- choreography with Smallpetitklein dance company, filmed on location at the Tay Rail Bridge and around Dundee
- film collaboration with East Coast Rail to recreate historic film of a train crossing the Tay Bridge
- using Instagram and Tumblr to record and share their *Scotland Creates* work
- working with a digital filmmaker to create and edit films using iPads and other accessible technology
- developing QR codes to create a trail around The McManus galleries and link to more information about the collections and history of Dundee
- creating, in homage to Peter Feathers' original cinema, a pop-up 'Electric Theatre' to show their digital films at The McManus
- attended digital film-making workshops in Edinburgh and created a viral film 'What makes a museum?' for The McManus



The Electric Theatre at The McManus





Project wall by Youth Action Group (YAG)

6. Case studies

Case study 4: Erin, Courteney, Marnie and India

Scotland Creates enabled four of the group to have volunteering and placement opportunities beyond the weekly group sessions.

On Thursday and Friday afternoons the Creative Learning Studio became their workspace to develop project ideas with lead artists Julie and Jon. This more intense engagement with the project allowed the young people to focus on areas that they wished to develop new skills and interests alongside gaining an insight in the day to day working of the museum and particularly the Creative Learning Team.

As well as the creative work that was produced, the placement team led the marketing and design ideas for posters and invitations, helped write interpretation, devised the QR trail around the galleries, painted walls white and edited their own films. They also led youth events and supported other projects at the museum such as documenting exhibition previews and events

using film and editing skills learned through the project.

Erin, then a secondary school pupil, led tours of the *Sense of Place* exhibition for other pupils from her school and has since been offered a place at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design.

Courteney, who developed her interest in creative writing through the project - working with actor Brian Cox - completed summer school at University of Dundee and enrolled on a creative writing course.

Marnie continued her secondary school studies and developed her creative skills with YAG.

India started a film-making course.

"You've learned to think in different ways because of being surrounded by so many people thinking in different ways, you can see other avenues and other ways to achieve the same goal."

YAG member

"There's more opportunities that have come out of it, so you can go on being creative, it doesn't stop."

YAG member

"It's something that I certainly love doing, so it doesn't feel like a chore then, whereas, some aspects of school really do."

YAG member

bit.ly/yagblog

bit.ly/yagininstagram

bit.ly/yagyoutube



Graphic created by the Youth Action Group





Sam in the animation studio

7. Engaging vulnerable young people

Peter Robinson, experienced trainer and practitioner in mental health, working with children and young people, shares his tips.

1. Make the time and effort to get advice. Scotland has a number of organisations who will be willing to help in practical ways and in increasing understanding of the main issues. The most useful information and support can come from families and carers. Don't be afraid to ask.
2. Contact other museums. Even though you work/volunteer in a museum you may be missing the opportunity to learn from other museums across the country. Join them on Facebook, Twitter etc for constant updates and varying approaches to engaging vulnerable children.
3. Seek the full support of line managers as it is unlikely that you can manage positive change for vulnerable people if you are feeling vulnerable or unsupported.
4. Be clear about what you are trying to offer and why. When people understand what you are trying to achieve they are often more eager to get involved. Don't be vague!
5. Let people know what they can expect when they bring their families to the museum. Direct them to information sources both within and outside the museum - web sites, maps, signposting, rest areas. Both very noisy and very quiet places can be identified. Many children and young people will benefit from seeing the building and contents before they visit. Perhaps invent a game highlighting what they might pass on the way to the museum.
6. To be truly user friendly the museum must increase the knowledge base of all staff that may have contact with vulnerable young people. It will only take one inappropriate word or action to spoil a potentially successful visit and future contact.
7. Design a user friendly evaluation system which should include immediate feedback (verbally as an event unfolds), written evaluation, email evaluation, simple smiley/sad face evaluation. It should be possible for everyone to offer feedback regardless of communication issues. Finally, ask families what kind of things make it too difficult to bring their child.
8. Be realistic and open about what you can offer and, where you can see gaps in your service, bring them to the attention of colleagues. Highlight the areas where improvements can be made at minimal cost. Nominate a colleague to identify funding sources.
9. Audit the staff group and identify what skills are present and whether anyone has direct valid experience of working or living with Autism, ADHD or other conditions on the autistic spectrum.
10. Keep in mind that you are already working with vulnerable young people and that their needs are very similar to yours. The articulation of needs may be different.

Peter Robinson





Digital film workshop



Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place at National Museum of Scotland

supported by



In partnership with



SCOTTISH BALLET



www.nms.ac.uk/scotlandcreates

APPENDIX: Scotland 365

Literature Review

Summary Points

- Through Cashback Kick the Dust Funding the Scotland 365 project engaged with 520 young people over the past two years. Specifically 126 moved into a positive destination and 110 had increased school attendance. These projects took place over the summer programmes and also Cashback Nights. Young people used objects from within the museums to develop their own piece of work collaborating with creatives, and this was then showcased within the museum or outside, e.g. Barrowlands Ballroom.
- The research highlights the broad spectrum of arts which were used to engage young people such as collage, mosaics, postcards, radio production, creative writing, arts and crafts, film making.
- Young people often had complex issues and mental illness, poverty and disability were highlighted as well as a high percentage of young people identifying as LGBT+ and struggling with home life, being care experienced or having experience of childhood trauma.
- There has been an increase in child protection procedures and staff have been trained in this area with child protection resources created.
- Report from Sherbert identified four different categories of young people, namely 'culture seekers' (interested in museums and heritage), 'connection seekers' (interested in heritage but NOT a museum person), 'entertainment seekers' (A museum person but NOT interested in heritage), 'inspiration seekers' (Not interested in heritage and NOT a museum person).
- The NMS research presents ideas about how to bring people into the museum such as film screenings, escape rooms, silent discos, quizzes, and transforming the space, moving away from this being a museum in the traditional sense.
- The evaluation of Scotland 365 found that the project had met its aims for young people engaged and achieved valuable learning for meaningful youth engagement in the heritage sector. Young people appreciated learning new skills, felt welcomed and understood more about heritage. Staff reported having increased levels of confidence in working with young people but only half felt they had the resources to do this. One of the key recommendations is that young people are encouraged to visit NMS as early as possible and they see themselves represented.
- The Tool-Kit brings together learning from across a two year national project which involved six museums engaging with 16-24 year olds. Some of the learning is around keeping things simple, thinking through practicalities for engagement and having a key contact or consistent friendly face. It also highlights the benefits of partnership working, such as with digital film-makers so that young people can really bring to life the objects or areas of interest they have chosen to focus on.
- Baurley and Younan (2021) report on the National Museum Wales highlights the importance of letting young people take control of the ideas within the space of the museum.

Notes on Papers

The notes provided split the reading into two, that is the sources provided by or linked to evaluations carried out by NMS directly, and then secondly, a review of resources relating to youth engagement from the wider sector.

NMS Evaluations and Resources

MacMilan, K. (2022) Evaluation of Scotland 365. Edinburgh: Research Scotland.

Following on from the interim evaluation of the National Museums Scotland, Scotland 365 Project, Research Scotland found that the project had achieved its aims for young people directly involved. It concluded that young people had -

- Developed an in depth and valuable experience of heritage, understanding the breadth of roles in the sector, felt included, and they felt a sense of agency and ownership in the Scotland 365 projects.
- Developed many new skills - including many transferable skills.
- Felt empowered, that they were listened to, their feeling their opinions were valued and that they could make a real contribution to change and creative events.
- All from the YET felt they understood more about heritage and half from the wider group. It is interesting to note

that less than half of people more widely felt that heritage and museums represent people like them.

The report comments that through the Scotland 365 Project, the YET piloted diverse and exciting ways for young people to engage with Heritage. These included new digital approaches, special events and new co-design collaborations with external partners.

Key Messages

- Staff valued the opportunities the project gave for cross departmental collaborations.
- Staff confidence in working in youth engagement increased but only a half felt they had resources to do this.
- An understanding on the importance of 'social time' increased and the need to relax and have fun as a team (staff and the YET).
- Paid traineeships were valued.
- The programme offered a huge range of volunteering roles to young people.
- New partnerships were developed and the chance for shared learning between sectors increased.

Key observations made by the Research Team are that NMS should engage young people as early as possible and make the museums relevant to them, so they feel represented. They also recommended

having a clear process to hear the voices of young people, clearly defined roles and responsibilities to promote young engagement and to work in partnership with other organisations.

Challenges

Covid 19 meant that for a large part of the project access to the Museum was not possible and staff were furloughed for a proportion of the project. The project prioritised a co-design approach with the YET and at times this was difficult to balance this with project management and delivery. The flexibility of the programme, whilst deliberate, also meant that this led to challenges focussing on the strategic development of the project.

Young Scot (2022) Scotland 365 Youth Engagement Recommendations. Edinburgh: Young Scot.

This brings together the findings from the YET and suggests that meaningful youth engagement is about providing a sustained offer to young people. It highlights the importance of time, taking a flexible open approach, treating young people as equal partners, promoting co-design, dealing with gaps in provision, creating an action plan, building on partnership working and creating dedicated youth engagement roles. The recommendations also highlight the importance of evaluation, reflection, promoting diversity and being clear to young people about the opportunities available, providing one-to-one support and guidance around volunteering and career development.

Hyder, N. (2021) Interim Evaluation of Scotland 365. National Museums Scotland and Research Scotland.

Project funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund Kicks the Dust Programme. Aims to:

- Increase 16 – 25 years olds engagement with National Museums Scotland as well as with wider heritage.
- Inform a strategy for youth engagement for National Museums Scotland.

During 2018, 2019 Scotland 365 delivered a series of workshops and residences to over 500 young people. Sherbert Research, which reviewed engagement developed four categories of engagement (as detailed below). The YET was the first of its kind and this work was delivered in partnership with Young Scot.

There were nine projects, five led by the YET. E.g.

- National Museum of Flight – to design an event that will reach connection seekers.
- Youth Focused Marketing to develop campaigns to attract Inspiration Seekers.
- Focusing on improving the experience of young people in the museum for inspiration seekers.

Four projects were led by staff. E.g.

- Engaging with schools.
- Offering traineeships.
- Connecting with local communities through a photography based project.

Scotland 365 worked towards the following intended outcomes:

- Young people have enjoyable experiences of heritage.
- Young people are empowered.
- Young people develop new skills.
- More and a wider range of young people engage with heritage in meaningful ways.
- Heritage is more relevant to a diverse range of young people.
- NMS staff understand how to engage young people with heritage.
- The quality of youth engagement in heritage increases.

Research Scotland – developed a logic model, a staff baseline survey (122 participated), young people's survey (18) and focus groups (11). Three young people have been employed as youth evaluators to contribute 6 days of time.

Outcomes for Young People

- 94% felt welcomed and included and learned new things, such as skills working in a team, IT skills, presenting, writing, and felt the programme had met or exceeded expectations.
- All felt respected by staff, listened to and treated as equals.
- 78% said they understood heritage better. Young people in focus groups felt it was really too early to say on outcomes related to heritage at this stage.
- 56% felt that the museums were more interesting and relevant for young people.
- There were mixed views to the extent to which the young people felt represented in the heritage and museums programme.
- They also had mixed views on whether there were jobs for them in the sector but were also more positive about their continued engagement in the sector.
- Staff had some awareness of the Scotland 365.
- Almost all staff felt it was important to provide a range of opportunities for young people and welcoming spaces.
- There were mixed views on whether senior leaders were committed to engaging young people at all levels in

the organisation and staff in turn had mixed views on their ability to work with young people. Half (53%) felt they had the skills and knowledge to engage with young people effectively and under half to engage with young people from different backgrounds (46%). Only 26% felt they had the tools and resources needed to develop their engagement with young people.

- Most staff (64%) reported that they rarely or never have an opportunity to reflect and discuss ways to improve their work with young people.
- Opportunities cited for young people to engage in heritage were volunteering, internships, apprenticeships, events and activities, entry-level jobs for undergraduates and graduates.
- Mixed views on young people's engagement in the sector were reported, with some staff feeling that whilst they can have a valuable contribution there were limited opportunities. A few staff also noted that it was challenging to manage these alongside their usual responsibilities.

Success Factors and Challenges

- Third of staff commented on engagement with young people through Scotland 365 being overall positive. Most also reported having a high level of commitment and engagement, and some were surprised at the level of interest and maturity of

the young people. A few even said that young people had confidence to speak out in a way that staff did not. Young people also enjoyed meeting staff. A few commented that having these connections was especially helpful during the pandemic.

- Young people responding to the survey liked the small group format of the YET project groups.
- A few commented that being able to take part online worked well for them.
- Some young people did not enjoy using the digital platform Basecamp. Some did not feel their project had progressed and others were unclear about the direction of their project. A few found it enjoyable but did not feel it helped them to connect to wider employment or training opportunities, and a few felt disillusioned about the lack of job opportunities.
- Some staff commented about young people not being able to attend scheduled sessions and not always communicating that they would not be able to attend.
- Staff also commented on the variations within the group and for example that older volunteers might not be in the position to represent younger teenagers.

Impact Arts (2020) A Report on Cashback to the Future's contribution to National Museum Scotland's "Scotland 365" Project, part of Kick the Dust. Glasgow: Impact Arts.

Key Points

Impact Arts and NMS long-standing relationships developed through summer based art programmes in engaging with young people, Cashback, Kick the Dust and Scotland 365. Engaged with 520 young people and supported them to move onto a positive destination either into school, training or employment.

Scotland 365 – initial stage 'Heritage Unlocked'

Consultation with 50 young people who do not currently engage with museums, 50 who are currently engaged, staff and volunteers. Found:

- Support Access through for example peer mentors.
- Have targeted exhibitions and events.
- Create space for young people, recognising that few have the financial resources to access the café.
- Refresh online presence – but also recognised for those not engaging this is not applicable.

The Report presents description and outcomes of summer programmes. For example, 'My Museum' took place in the National Museum Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow Kelvin College, Tannahill Centre in Renfrewshire, YMCA at Kilmarnock in East Ayrshire in July 2018. 167 young people drew on inspiration from within the respective museums to then take part in an immersive creative programme with 38 creatives, learning skills in performance, digital media, music and visual art. Their work was showcased at Paisley Abbey and NMS. In Year 2 the Summer Programme's theme was 'Wild and Majestic' and at NMS. 157 young people engaged (47 from the year before) with 38 creatives with the showcase of the work presented at the Barrowland Ballroom and NMS.

The Cashback Nights was an aftercare programme to Cashback to the Future engaging with a team of artists exploring themes such as for example Paisley Pattern and the history of Paisley textiles. A Digital Showcase was held with young people giving tours of their venues and the projects that inspired them.

In 2019 to 2020 the Cashback nights was carried out again across five areas with 267 young people across the five areas. In North Ayrshire focusing on identity, East Ayrshire conspiracy theories, in Glasgow the future of Glasgow, and in Paisley, reflecting on life at drama school drawing on the work of John Byrne; finally in Edinburgh the theme of 'Wild and Majestic.' Across the areas they used different mediums such as mood boards, collage, mosaics, postcards, radio, creative writing, making costumes, using

puppets and film. The Cashback nights had good success with all reporting an increase in confidence, 126 achieving a positive destination in employment, training or education, 110 increased school attendance.

Barriers Identified

Complex and unique to each individual, but in particular:

- Mental illness and anxiety
- Poverty
- Disability

Also a high percentage of young people who:

- Identify as LGBTQI and are struggling with their home life.
- Are care experienced.
- Have experienced childhood trauma.

Staff dealt with 38 cases through child protection procedures and have now staff trained in Child protection and suite of resources created, increased staff and aftercare offered to young people.

Partnership working

Support from NMS Learning Staff in bringing the young people to the collections and for some this was their first time. Also linking in with other opportunities e.g. LGBTQI Trail.

Noted that the change in staff at NMS impacts upon delivery and the final summer cases could not be shown in the Museums, which were the inspiration for the work. Noted that the most successful project took place in Edinburgh where the young people were able to access the

museum on hand and this draws out the importance of thinking through the practical barriers of engagement for young people.

Sherbert Research (2019) Young people (16-25s) in Scotland: Engagement with heritage and museums. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland.

Key Findings

35% of young people reported they are interested in heritage and a museum person. 28% are interested in heritage but not a museum person. 8% are museum people not interested in heritage. 29% are not interested in either.

A big draw for young people not interested is that activities are fun, entertaining and have a 'wow' factor. For those interested this is about the stories that bring heritage to life.

Analysis defines 'culture seekers': 35% Those who have been engaged in museums from young and feel welcomed in the space, and continue to engage, wanting to see museums and heritage evolve. Possible barriers are around exhibits lacking depth and them being unable to continue to go to exhibits because of costs. They view museums as being educational, important, welcoming and entertaining. The highest levels were found in Glasgow (18%) and Edinburgh/Aberdeen (13%) (58% female) Would like to see their loyalty to be rewarded as a way of strengthening engagement.

'Connection Seekers- interested in heritage but NOT a museum person 28% (60% male). They are interested in heritage but not museums - they are primarily seen as educational spaces and not for them. They want museums to really bring heritage to life for them, so that they can make a connection and stimulate their thinking. (Quotes from this group are about enjoying being at castles instead and feeling in museums that they can't touch things) They feel intimidated by museums and see them as being too intellectual/not cool. They view museums as being educational (66%) and important (35%) Biggest percentage in Glasgow (19%) and then Edinburgh (9%)

'Entertainment Seekers' 8%: A museum person but NOT interested in heritage (51% female). This group likes museums but connection with heritage is not important to them. They are looking for inspiration, fun and excitement from museums, things that 'wow' them and stretch their minds, but in a fun way rather than a challenging way. Important to this group is fear of missing out (FOMO). Feel museums are old fashioned when younger, more likely to go to temporary exhibits, to go more often they want to be WOWED. Highest number Fife (15%) followed by Glasgow and Edinburgh (10%).

'Inspiration Seekers' 29%: Not interested in heritage and NOT a museum person (54% male). This group is the least engaged with both heritage and museums. They are looking to be entertained – museums really have to go all out with 'wow' experiences they can't get elsewhere to catch their eye

and get them through the door. Tech and interactivity are important in exhibits. No past relationship with museums and it's hard to get them to go into it. Heritage lacks value to them. Highest in Glasgow 17% and Edinburgh 15%.

Baby Boomers and Gen X: Most remember going to museums, love the space and want to attend to see new things as well having targeted exclusives to their age group.

National Museums Scotland (NMS) Toolkit For Working with Young People in Museums inspired by Scotland Creates : A Sense of Place (NMS, 2017).

Key Messages

- It draws on the experience of a two year national project, Scotland Creates: A Sense of Place led by the National Museum Scotland. This was carried out in collaboration with five other museums.
- Hints and Tips – be clear about what you do, get the word out there widely as well as using targeted approaches. Those aged 16-24 did not like being described as young people but rather preferred to be referred to as young adults. Young people liked the sessions to ideally be run by the same friendly face and preferred if they were asked what food they would like to be at sessions rather than this just being assumed. They liked when the plan was simple but also that when things

go wrong you can learn from them. They also liked the idea of writing a blog or tweeting about their work before the final project.

- The report noted the importance of thinking about the skills young people can learn, the social aspect, personal development and that this is a creative outlet.
- Young people were part of the recruitment process and the importance of listening to young people was stressed.
- Having a key contact, a structure in terms of activities and time to discuss was important.
- Think ahead about the practicalities for young people; do not assume all will be independent travellers.
- Bringing partners on board should also be with the young people involved in the decision-making.
- Museum objects can be a source of inspiration and a visit to the behind-the-scenes museum store stimulates ideas. Suggested that young people take photographs or write a blog about the objects they have chosen.

Case Studies Presented. E.g.

- Dick Institute Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire partnered with Scottish Ballet and the theme of 'Legacy of Lace' chosen,

young people involved in range of activities, such as attending digital film making workshops and rapping online inspired by Robbie Burns, planning, marketing and delivering an event, object handling with the Museum officer, writing text and exhibition layout planning.

- National Museum Scotland, Edinburgh Core group of 5-6 young people, met with NMS Staff, chose objects, appointed a film-maker and script to make three animated films, research visits related to the objects e.g. Roslin Institute – Dolly the Sheep, organised a Museum Takeover Day, wrote a blog, took part in the installation of the final exhibition, delivered a guided tour for museum staff, visitor surveys and evaluation, attended digital film-making workshops.
- The MacManus, Dundee was the only museum with an established Youth Action Group (YAG) and the museum staff chose 4 objects. The young people researched the people related to these projects, worked with other professionals to create a digital film, attended digital film-making workshops, used Instagram and Tumblr to share their work.

Four young people from across the projects also progressed on to have volunteering and placement opportunities, and they led on the design ideas for posters and invitations. All four went on to develop their skills in areas such as creative writing, film making and design.

Tips and Advice on working with Vulnerable Young People

Key Points

Ask others – parents and carers are the most useful, learn from other Museums, get support from management, be clear about what you are offering, consider creating a game so people know what to expect when they come to the museum, be user friendly by for example thinking of the way language is used, get feedback in how people are able to give it, audit staff to find out what skills staff have. 'Keep in mind that you are already working with vulnerable young people and that their needs are very similar to yours.'

NMS Executive Summary

Key Points

16-25 year olds are proud of their heritage and love living in Scotland, are worried about their futures and take their physical and mental well-being seriously, with personal happiness and life experiences more important than money. As above, regarding the four different groups and the importance of 'knowing, informing, inspiring, empowering and respecting' this is a diverse group. Clear hook - offer exhibitions they can interact with and learn about heritage in informal ways. FOMO - limited tickets and limited availability draw them in. Like the idea of using the museum space differently - out of hours, for job fairs, quiet space. Importance of museums in terms of heritage could be stronger and felt that doing outreach to challenge

perceptions is a good idea. More could be done to reach 16-25 year olds particularly in terms of communication. Baby Boomers and Gen X are hugely proud of heritage and have a more established relationship than the 16-25 year olds with museums. They understand the importance of engaging with 16-25 year olds, inspired by: Museum Lates, behind the scenes tours, film screenings, music, drinks and app related activities as well as workshops and lectures during the day.

Some of the ideas proposed (within museums)

- Brand hook ups that link to the theme of the exhibition.
- Whisky tasting and/or making.
- Style, beauty, fashion, hair etc.
- Through the years masterclass.
- Design and links to having a go to weave tartan.
- A diversity of food tour both making and tasting.
- Exploring their genealogy and clan links to include axe-throwing/lifting.
- The role of gender through the years.
- Conflict in sport, trying on the old kits.
- Silent discos, DJs, gigs, parties (school prom, grad ball).
- Cocktails, microbrewery.
- Great coffee and pop up food trucks.
- Film screenings, behind the scenes, immersive theatre (e.g. Punch drunk).
- Escape rooms, ball pit, trampolining, climbing wall, zip wire.

Some of the ideas proposed (beyond museums)

- Challenges linked to the past (mock highland games).
- Alternative city tours and walks (freshers' week and beyond).
- Shopping centre activities that are silly, fun and informative e.g. Clan quizzes, Freshers fair activities (just after) and Free voucher giveaways for coffee/events.

Additional Relevant Resources from the Wider Sector

Baurley, J. and Younan, S. (2021) Youth and Community Engagement at the Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales. In Eid, H. and Forstrom, M. (Eds.) Museum Innovation: Building More Equitable, Relevant and Impactful Museums. Oxon: Routledge.

The chapter discussed the work of the National Museum Wales and the exhibition lead by young people No Môr Plastic which highlighted the impact of plastic pollution in the sea. The young people did this by working in partnership with staff and also the organisation Surfers Against Sewage (SAS), to do beach cleans and use these treated materials to add to existing exhibitions. Recommendations:

- Create networks with community partners.
- Build momentum and keep building on successes.
- Grow communities of interest.
- Hand over control.

- Allow real-time decision-making processes where possible.
- Aim to speed up and streamline museum-level decision making.
- Bring senior staff and grassroots groups together, create points of contact.
- Be prepared to experiment.
- Be prepared to break (or bend) some rules.
- Challenge established ways of thinking and the status quo.
- Take a stance.

Summary

Overall, this research suggested that the most successful youth engagement was when young people were given control to take forward their own ideas, co-producing with museum staff to have their voice truly heard. The study highlighted the benefits of partnership working, the use of arts and young people learning new skills. Young people could also have complex needs and it was important that staff were trained and prepared to deal with these.

Morrison, J. (2019) Are heritage attractions doing enough to attract young visitors? Available online at at: <https://advisor.museumsand-heritage.com/supplier-news/heritage-attractions-enough-attract-young-visitors/>

Museums can not be everything to everyone at all times. It was observed that if we change the language in the interpretive material for one group, this

might alienate another. Holding special exhibitions and events was seen as a way to reach young people aged 16-25. Examples given were museum 'takeovers' and exhibitions of particular relevance to young people, as well as creating audio guides relevant to different groups. These actions were felt to provide a more relevant experience for all visitors and could be accompanied by targeted promotion.

Summary

The majority of reports into best practices in engaging young people with heritage focus on the 16 -25 year olds as being the most difficult group to reach. This is in part because it can not be done through links with schools and supporting families to engage as a whole. It is possible that as we get older we become more interested in the past. It is maybe also unsurprising that in the 16-25 year old category, this group may be less likely to visit a museum no matter what is done to engage them. This may be simply due to lifestyle factors like time constraints and this needs to be borne in mind.

Madgin, R. Webb, D. Ruiz, P. Snelson, T. (2016) Engaging Youth in Cultural Heritage: Time, Place and Communication. Available online at at: [http://www.ycmh.co.uk/pdf/HLF%20Report%20Final%5B1%5D%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ycmh.co.uk/pdf/HLF%20Report%20Final%5B1%5D%20(1).pdf)

This report challenged concepts around how we define and value heritage in the UK and how this thinking might be a barrier to effective engagement with young people. The findings focus on research carried out into “the world’s oldest surviving skateboard spot” beside the Southbank Centre in London.

The report was designed to answer two main research questions:

1. In what ways do young people engage with urban heritage?
2. How can this engagement be used to develop a better understanding of the relationship between young people and historic places?

The report had four main conclusions about how the young people involved in the research understood their historic environment:

- Young people’s understanding of time differed from that traditionally used in our heritage system.
- Young people do not differentiate between “intangible and tangible” heritage.
- Young people valued the site for what it enabled them to do and experience, rather than for its physical architecture alone. Their relationship with the heritage was social and sensual as well as physical. As the report states it was “a less bounded, site-based interpretation of place and to a more networked understanding”.

- The report stated that the methods used by young people to communicate their appreciation were often very different to traditional ways.

The report calls for a consideration to unpacking the relevance of much of our traditional heritage to young people and the way young people view and value heritage. It suggests that often heritage was seen by young people as a “continuum” with the present and future. Rather than something being preserved in time, there was an interest with what is the role and relevance to today, an idea that heritage can be added to by each generation and needs to be part of today and tomorrow. This suggests that if something is packaged as belonging to the past without connecting it to today this will be a barrier to many young people engaging with heritage. In this way, many of the time constrained values and frameworks currently in use in the heritage sector may be irrelevant to young people. The report also cited the language used in interpretive materials as alienating to engagement by young people.

The report recommended -

- More attempts to engage young people with heritage that matters to them.
- More recognition of intangible heritage.
- More research into understanding what matters to young people in terms of heritage.

Risk Assessments

Autonomy for young people to genuinely take the lead was recognised as feeling “risky” to institutions, however it was also recognised as necessary for results. Despite using YouTube and putting digital content online, some institutions did not receive the viewers they might. The following questions were put forward as suggestions to rectify this - evidence of the need to devolve power and responsibility to young people who know what interests them and how to communicate this.

- How is this content relevant and engaging to children and young people?
- Who creates and curates it?
- Who is it for?
- How do you measure that success and relevance?

Icarus (2015) Young people and the heritage sector. Available online at:
https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/research/young_people_and_heritage_sector_icarus-report-accessible-2.pdf

This research highlights the importance of partnership working, investing time in building strong relationships with the youth work sector and focusing on youth leadership.

It is raised that staff within the heritage sector feel that they lack skills in working with young people and that more training is needed to obtain best practice, not only

to build skills but to challenge some unhelpful attitudes that still exist around young people as 'problem' visitors.

A lack of sympathy and consideration of young people was highlighted in some interpretation materials and a greater use of digital technologies recommended to make collections more accessible to young people. In addition, it was felt that recognising and understanding how young people view and value heritage was essential.

Heritage Lottery Fund (2013)

How to involve young people in heritage projects. Available online at:

https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/guidance/young_people_good_practice.pdf

This report set up key recommendations for engaging young people with heritage. The key recommendations for best practices outlined in this report were to -

- Let Young people take the lead.
- Provide hands on Creative Activities.
- Let young people know the skills they could learn.
- Recognise their achievements.
- Forge a partnership between heritage and youth sector organisations.
- Involve an experienced youth worker or teaching professional.