

Youth Ambassadors Young Start Project Oct 2022 to Nov 2025

Final Report Project Highlights

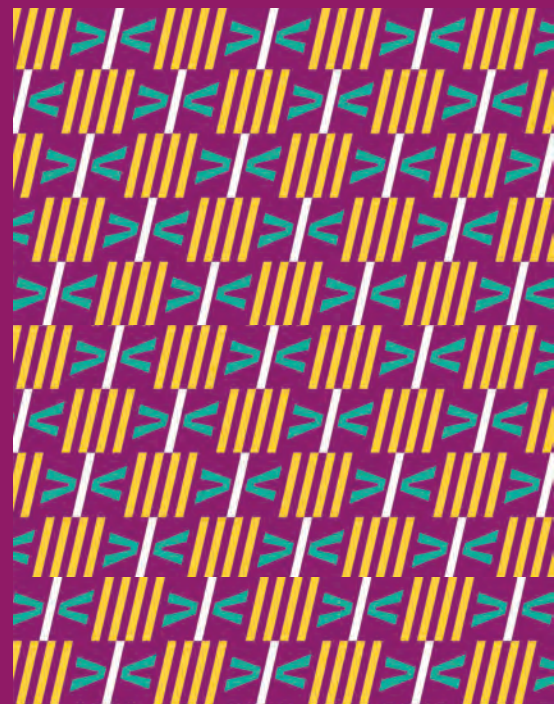


March 2026



Acknowledgements

SCOREscotland would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the young people, volunteers, and support staff who participated in and contributed to this project. Your enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to engage have been at the heart of its success. The energy, creativity, and lived experiences shared by participants have shaped the programme in meaningful and lasting ways. We are also deeply grateful to our partners, who have enriched the programme, expanded learning opportunities, and strengthened community connections. Through collaboration, shared expertise, and practical support, these partnerships have enabled us to deliver a more inclusive, responsive, and impactful programme.



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About SCOREscotland

At SCOREscotland we are deeply rooted in Wester Hailes, a neighbourhood within the lowest 15% on the SIMD, where young people face exposure to anti-social behaviour, racial hate crime, and other forms of criminal activity. Through services such as the Community Fridge and youth clubs, SCOREscotland provides a stable and trusted base for the community.

Guided by our vision of achieving social justice and race equality within a diverse and inclusive society, at SCOREscotland we have used the Youth Ambassadors Young Start project to raise awareness of racism through informal, intercultural events and activities that bring young people and communities together.

Our mission is to work in partnership to address both the causes and effects of racism while actively promoting race equality, breaking down barriers that prevent minority ethnic communities from fully participating in civic life—ensuring equal access to services and information, opportunities to influence policy and service delivery, and the freedom to engage socially, politically, culturally, and economically while feeling valued and integrated within society.

Introduction

Our National Lottery funded Youth Ambassadors Young Start project (Oct 2022 – Nov 2025) has helped us to build on the strong foundations established during this three-year project. This report highlights the progress and activities delivered across southwest Edinburgh—particularly in Wester Hailes—demonstrating how the Young Start project evolved over time to respond to the needs of black and minority ethnic young people and the wider community.

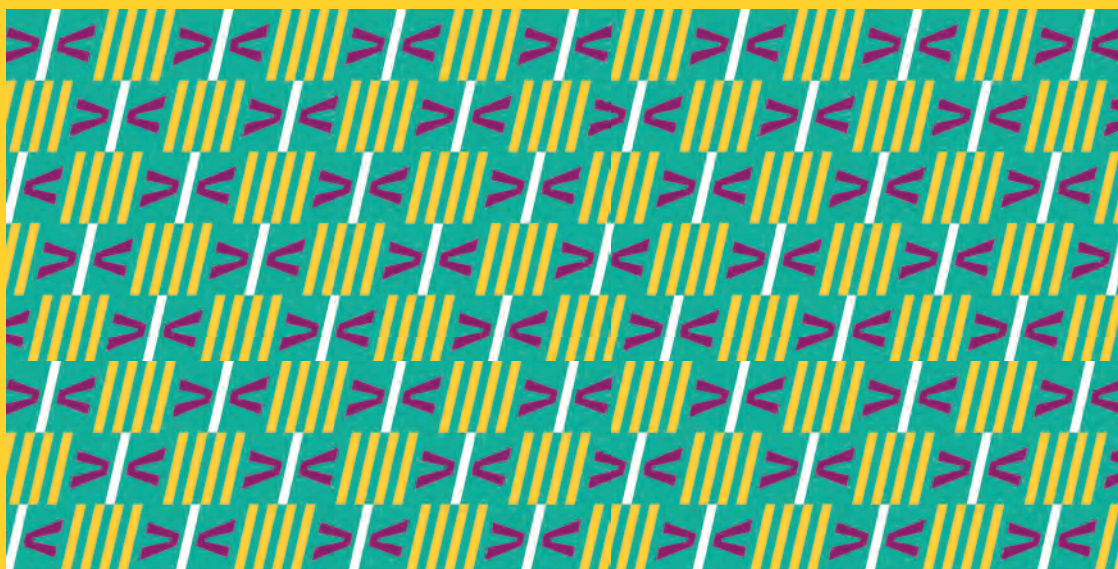
The main outcome of this project was for young people aged from 11 to 18 years old to create an ambassador's programme, to be a cross-cultural learning project which would include an anti-racist peer education delivered to local young people (mainly from minority ethnic backgrounds) to open up discussions around racism, race hate crime, colonisation, power and privilege, as well as creating a space to share heritage, traditions and cultures.

The project was designed to engage with young people through our existing partnerships with local youth clubs and community spaces.

The young people we worked with faced multiple intersectional barriers, including language, poverty, racism—particularly within the local community—Islamophobia, and exposure to crime.

These challenges often resulted in social isolation, mental health issues, and a sense of disconnection from the wider community. This project was designed to enable young people to engage with their local community through positive relationship-building, learning about local services, and sharing experiences.

During the past three years of delivering this project we have focused on dismantling barriers that limit young people's participation by offering meaningful opportunities for positive engagement. We believe that this project has empowered young people to contribute to community learning and development. Through engaging activities and workshops, we have supported their active involvement across social, political, cultural, and economic spheres, fostering a strong sense of belonging and confidence within our communities.



Project Highlights: Final Year



Inclusive Lunch Clubs in Local High Schools

We delivered weekly Lunch Clubs at Tynecastle High School and Wester Hailes High School, creating safe, welcoming spaces for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) young people (primarily S4–S6) to connect, share experiences, and develop leadership skills. Participants represented a wide range of backgrounds, including from Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Hong Kong, Brazil, Romania and Senegal. Each club engaged an average of 10 young people, with a consistent core group of 10–15 pupils across the year.

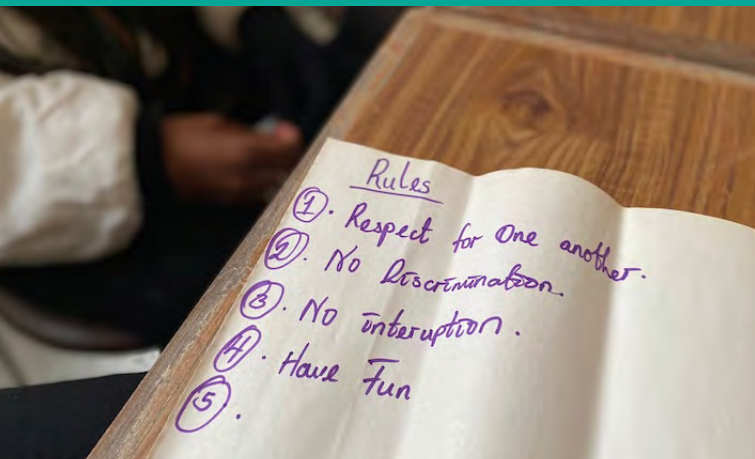
Key outcomes included:

- Increased cultural pride and confidence among participants.
- Greater visibility and inclusion of underrepresented pupils within school life.
- Stronger cross-cultural understanding among the wider pupil population.
- Improved access to SCOREScotland youth work services.



Cultural Awareness and Youth Leadership

Young people played a central role in shaping and delivering activities, including “My Story, My Voice” sessions, where participants shared personal histories, challenged stereotypes, and built empathy. Mini Culture Days, beginning with Sudan, featuring food, dress, games, and country facts. Ramadan Awareness Day 2025, attended by around 60 pupils, with an Imam-led talk, Q&A, and discussions that strengthened understanding and mutual respect between Muslim and non-Muslim pupils. These activities enabled young people to take ownership, develop public speaking skills, and act as cultural ambassadors within their schools.



Skills Development and Cultural Empowerment

We delivered a range of skills-based and cultural empowerment workshops, including a Hair Braiding Workshop, led by Mandy Braids, as part of the Young Black Empowerment Project, promoting pride in afro hair and cultural heritage. Leadership and teamwork activities such as event planning, public speaking practice, and outdoor team challenges. These sessions supported confidence-building, creativity, and cooperation.

Access to Wider Opportunities

We actively promoted engagement with the Duke of Edinburgh Award, helping young people understand and access this opportunity through targeted outreach and presentations.

Residential Experience

From 30 July to 1 August 2025, 28 young people aged 13–17 took part in a three-day residential at Glenbeg Bunkhouse and the Cairngorms Activity Centre.

The programme combined outdoor adventure, team-building, and leadership activities in a safe and supportive environment, fostering resilience, collaboration, and confidence. Participants represented countries including Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Brazil, Romania, and Senegal.

Year 3 Impact Summary

- 100 young people engaged across activities
- 12 volunteers supported delivery
- Young people demonstrated increased confidence, leadership, and willingness to share their identities and experiences
- Schools reported improved inclusion and stronger peer relationships
- The Lunch Clubs became a recognised and valued part of schools' inclusion approaches

Year 3 Overall Reflection

Over the final year, the project grew from targeted engagement into a sustained, youth-led programme embedded within school and community life. By combining cultural celebration, leadership development, and meaningful participation, the Youth Ambassadors Young Start project empowered young people to shape more inclusive, confident, and connected communities—laying strong foundations for future work.



Years 1 and 2 Reflection: Looking Back and Looking Forward



Development of the Peer Education Project

During the first two years, YP worked with professionals—including Black history academics, anti-racist educators, and cultural practitioners—and visited historical venues to develop their peer education course content. These sessions created safe spaces for BME YP to share experiences with trusted peer groups. Staff supported YP in identifying ways to challenge racism, fostering improved mental and emotional wellbeing.

To strengthen relationships and team cohesion, YP participated in team-building activities, outdoor learning, and cultural exchange sessions, including sharing traditional dishes. These were delivered alongside anti-racism workshops to support confidence, collaboration, and peer learning.

YP also promoted SCOREScotland's Bike Library service, working with the police on bike marking schemes to reduce theft, arranging group rides, and encouraging active travel to improve health and reduce carbon emissions.

The Ambassador programme was delivered as part of the volunteering element of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, allowing participants to gain an accredited award for their CV.

Young People's Involvement in Design and Delivery

All activities were informed by YP input, ensuring that the programme reflected their ideas, needs, and experiences. Using culturally diverse staff knowledge and language skills, SCOREScotland

sought YP feedback through regular monitoring and evaluation, promoting ownership and learning. YP directly designed course content, shaping the direction of peer education sessions. They worked with professionals—including historians, trainers, filmmakers, and animators—but retained ultimate responsibility for session design. Materials, including animations, audio clips, and group exercises, were created by the YP themselves. Through this process, ambassadors gained confidence, leadership skills, and peer-learning opportunities, allowing other YP to benefit from direct lived experiences in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

Sessions were regularly reviewed with YP to ensure they met expectations, allowing adjustments to maintain focus and deliver outcomes aligned with both participants' and partner organisations' needs.

Maximising Young People's Strengths

YP were affected by racism and discrimination in their communities, and SCOREscotland provided safe spaces to explore these challenges. In 2021, participants from Knots and Crosses Youth Club engaged in the Education for Climate Justice series in partnership with the universities of Edinburgh, St Andrews, and Glasgow Caledonian, as well as Teach the Future. They actively participated in COP26 protests, supporting the anti-racism and migrant justice bloc.

YP were also featured in an Edinburgh University FutureLearn course with over 1,000 international participants, sharing their commitment to anti-racism. During lockdown, they volunteered for six



months as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award, creating posters and flyers to raise awareness of racism in schools and the wider community.

In summer 2021, YP collaborated with the Edinburgh Art Festival on a project exploring Scotland's links to slavery and colonialism, reporting improved understanding of historical and ongoing social, financial, and racial injustices. This foundation informed the development of their own course content for the peer education programme.

Reflection / Overview

During this 3-year project we delivered a focused programme of activities aimed at increasing awareness, understanding, and dialogue around racism and racial inequality among young people. This was centred on education, cultural exploration, and participant-led learning, building confidence and encouraging open discussion on complex and often sensitive issues.

Key activities included the delivery of ten anti-racism workshops exploring themes such as colonialism, systemic racism, white privilege, and Afrofuturism. These sessions created safe and supportive spaces for young people to reflect, ask



questions, and engage in meaningful dialogue. Participants were encouraged to critically examine historical and contemporary forms of racism and consider their own roles in challenging inequality. To complement the workshops, we organised a series of educational visits, including museum trips focused on abolitionism and the life of Frederick Douglass, which helped participants connect historical struggles against racism to present-day realities. A visit to the National Museum of Scotland's "Little Black Dress" exhibition enabled participants to explore race, identity, and representation through the lens of fashion and Afrofuturism, broadening their cultural understanding.

Culinary workshops formed an important part of the programme, using food as a tool for cultural exchange. Participants shared traditional dishes from their countries of origin, creating opportunities for informal learning, storytelling, and connection. The year also included planning for a multicultural heritage event highlighting five different cultures, aimed particularly at young people from white backgrounds, to promote intercultural understanding and dialogue.

Together, these activities provided a holistic approach to learning about racism, identity, and diversity, combining education, creativity, and lived experience.

Involving Young People in Developing and Delivering Activities

Young people were actively involved in shaping and delivering the project. At the outset, we identified participants' interests, strengths, and comfort levels, agreeing shared principles around consent, respect, and participation. A WhatsApp group was used to maintain regular communication, share updates, and encourage attendance at weekly sessions.

Participants were encouraged to take ownership of activities, contribute ideas, and support one another, ensuring that the programme remained inclusive, responsive, and youth-led throughout the year.

Building on People's Strengths

The project deliberately built on the diverse skills and interests of participants to maximise engagement and impact. Those with creative interests designed promotional materials and flyers to communicate key messages. Participants enthusiastic about culture and food led cooking sessions, sharing recipes and stories from their heritage. Young people with an interest in history and learning supported the planning of museum visits, while others took the lead in organising and coordinating the heritage event.

By recognising and valuing individual strengths, participants were empowered as active



Partnership

Over the years, we have been working in partnership with local schools, youth providers, and organisations including to deliver inclusive programmes. City-wide partnerships included the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Edinburgh Carnival, Edinburgh Arts Festival, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Friends of the Award, Edinburgh College of Art, The Green Team, and universities including Napier, Heriot-Watt, and the University of Edinburgh. Positive relationships with the local police were maintained to support diversionary activities and community safety initiative. The Big Project, Y Project, Clovenstone Community Centre, and Wester Hailes Library Youth Club. Participants played an active role in community consultations and surveys, including the Wester Hailes Place Plan, and the 'Scotland Loves Local' project, which promoted active travel. The project also offered safe spaces for YP to share experiences of anti-social behaviour and crime, working with trusted partners, including the local police, to explore solutions. The project promoted improvements in the YP's physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

The project benefited from strong partnerships with several organisations. Collaboration with the National Museum of Scotland enhanced learning around history, representation, and identity. The Whale Arts Centre hosted our heritage event and contributed to wider community engagement through the arts. Gate 55 Community Hub served as the main project base, providing a welcoming and accessible space for workshops, planning sessions, and group discussions. All of these partnerships enriched the programme, expanded learning opportunities, and strengthened community connections.

contributors rather than passive recipients. This approach fostered confidence, leadership, and a sense of shared purpose, enabling young people to become advocates for inclusion and change within their communities.

Impact and Difference Made

Over the years, the project made a meaningful difference in participants' understanding of racism and cultural diversity. Young people developed greater awareness of historical and structural inequalities, increased confidence in discussing race, and improved empathy towards others' experiences.

Workshops encouraged critical thinking and open dialogue, while museum visits deepened historical understanding. Culinary sessions and cultural exchanges broke down barriers, fostered connection, and promoted mutual respect. The planned multicultural event further strengthened intercultural learning by creating space for young people to learn directly from one another. Overall, participants demonstrated increased confidence, awareness, and willingness to challenge racism, contributing to a more informed, empathetic, and inclusive community.

Learning

Successes

- Increased awareness and understanding of racism, colonialism, and white privilege
- Strong engagement and open dialogue in workshops
- Cultural appreciation fostered through shared food and storytelling
- High enthusiasm for the heritage and multicultural event

Challenges

- Limited collaboration with other youth clubs due to staff changes mid-year
- Some participants experienced social isolation and found cross-cultural interaction challenging

Key Learning

- The importance of flexibility and adaptability in delivery
- The need for stronger partnerships with local youth organisations
- The value of tailored support for quieter or socially isolated young people
- These lessons reinforced the importance of sustained engagement, community collaboration, and responsive youth work practice.

Building on our learning from Years 1 and 2, we planned to strengthen and expand the programme in the following ways:

- Increased collaboration with organisations such as Broomhouse Space, Wester Hailes Youth Club, Whale Arts, and Bridge8 Hub to broaden reach and impact
- Professional anti-racism training, delivered by specialist facilitators, to deepen learning and equip young people with practical tools to challenge racism
- Exploration of the Bike Library project, training young people as ride leaders to promote leadership, wellbeing, and community engagement

These developments allowed us to respond more effectively to challenges identified, enhance sustainability, and continue empowering young people to lead change within their communities.

This Years 1 and 2 reflection demonstrated the project's growing impact and provided a strong foundation for the final year of delivery, ensuring that learning, participation, and inclusion remain at the heart of our work.



/ STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES /

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