

Youth Scotland : **Young Grantmakers in Glasgow** Process Evaluation



In 2021, The National Lottery Community Fund and Youth Scotland started working together to design and deliver a participatory grant-making pilot project in Glasgow. The overall aim of the project was to address anti-social behaviour by engaging young people in discussions on these issues, and tailoring a funding offer around identified themes and local need, giving young people the opportunity to decide what should be funded.

Youth Scotland were awarded funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to:

- Recruit participants aged 13-25 from four areas of Glasgow (Bridgeton, Calton, Dalmarnock and Parkhead).
- Support these young people with training to understand the grant-making process and take on a decision-making role.
- Accredit young people's participation, learning and personal development achieved through the project.

Through the project, young people, youth workers, The National Lottery Community Fund and Youth Scotland worked together to create the 'Glasgow Up' fund, which opened to applications in February 2022. In April 2022, a total of £40,000 was awarded to 10 successful applicants, funding different Glasgow-based youth projects including health and wellbeing initiatives, skills development opportunities and community clean-up efforts.

Rationale for the project

Wishing to explore participatory approaches to grant making that supported local people to identify solutions to challenges in their communities, The National Lottery Community Fund started developing a plan for a localised funding intervention. Meanwhile, local projects were highlighting concerns about rising anti-social behaviour in and around the Calton ward, and it was agreed that this was an area where a pilot project may be impactful.

The National Lottery Community Fund team were eager to involve young people in the project, but recognised that they needed some support to design a programme which would deliver a valuable and engaging experience for participants. Recognising Youth Scotland's past experience in managing youth-led funding projects, The National Lottery Community Fund approached Youth Scotland to work together on the project.

Both organisations see the value of involving people with lived experience in project planning and decision-making. They agreed that local young people could use their insight, knowledge and experiences of their communities to identify meaningful solutions and decide where funding would be most effectively invested.

Youth Scotland's experience

Youth Scotland is the largest national youth work organisation in Scotland. They support over 1,700 member youth groups and over 80,000 young people across the country. As part of its Youth Participation work, Youth Scotland has garnered extensive experience of putting young people in decision-making roles, for example:

- Youth Scotland's Young Placechangers programme gave young people the skills and confidence to act with others in their community to improve the environmental quality, biodiversity, and vibrancy of their neighbourhoods.

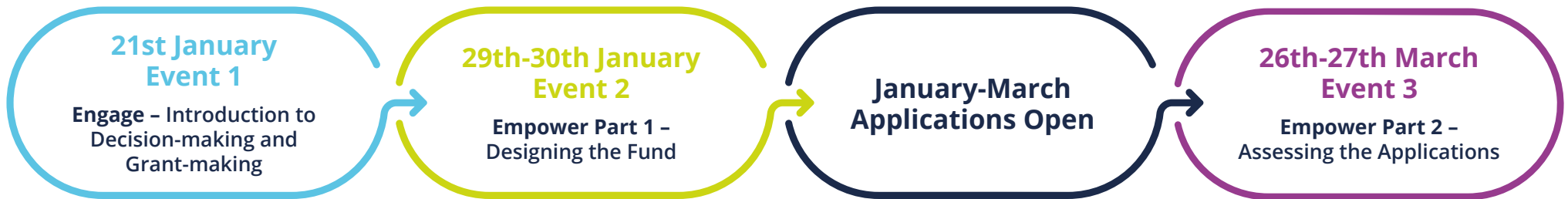
- Scotland: The Big Picture enlisted Youth Scotland to engage a steering group of young people from across the country to help shape their youth advocacy strategy and create a communications plan to reach as many other young people as possible.
- Since late 2020, Youth Scotland has been delivering the Young Islanders' Challenge, which supports young people in island communities to take the lead in telling their stories about life as young islanders and issues that affect their communities.

Evaluation approach

The Lines Between was appointed to evaluate the Young Grantmakers pilot and identify the successes, challenges, opportunities, learning and impact of the programme. The evaluation involved observation of two events, followed by interviews with the Young Grantmakers, youth workers, representatives from Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund and a successful applicant. The remainder of this report sets out the evaluation findings.

Programme structure

The Young Grantmakers programme was delivered over three separate events, modelled after the first three stages of Youth Scotland's iLead Pathway: Engage, Empower Part 1 and Empower Part 2. A timeline is presented below:



Event 1 – Engage

At the first session, attendees got to know each other through icebreakers, activities and games led by facilitators from Youth Scotland. Young people were then introduced to the grant-making process and learned more about their roles and responsibilities as Young Grantmakers.

“ Before we did anything, we did the ice breakers. I really liked that because it got us up and moving and if we didn't know someone, we would talk to them and get to know them more and then we'd go into the funding stuff. I liked that, that was good. You end up laughing at each other and then you're like best pals.”
Young Grantmaker

There were also discussions about what is meant by 'anti-social behaviour' and young people's experiences of it in their local communities, which fed into the formation of the funding priorities at the next event.

Event 2 – Empower Part 1

The second event focussed on designing the fund. The Young Grantmakers made decisions about the fund's name, the application form, award values and eligibility criteria. They also agreed upon five funding priorities which they believed would most effectively address anti-social behaviour in the East of Glasgow.

This session was a residential event where participants took part in workshops over two days with an overnight stay in between. Evaluation participants valued the inclusion of a residential event in the programme, noting that it provided opportunities for bonding, allowed for a longer working day and was an attractive prospect for young people.

“ I would say the residential was really good because it brought everyone together...it kind of creates a group cohesion really quickly.”
Youth Scotland

“ It's really good both for relationship building with the staff and the participants, but also between the participants themselves. And it gives you just that a bit of extra time to work with young people.”
Youth Scotland

“ The hotel room was so good. Aye, to have my own room and all that. It was brilliant. Just to have my own space, it was good.”
Young Grantmaker

A representative from The National Lottery Community Fund was present for day 2 of this event to observe the session and provide support and guidance where needed.



Event 3 - Empower Part 2

The Glas-glow Up fund received 40 applications, all of which were reviewed at the final two-day event. This involved the panel (Young Grantmakers, Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund) reading each application in full, reviewing its compliance with the funding criteria and then having a wider discussion about the Young Grantmakers' views on the potential impact and reach of each proposed project.

“ I think everything that was decided did come from the young people, they were the decision makers in the process. And I think that is credit to the whole programme, because they felt comfortable enough and confident enough that they could put forward their opinion and have these discussions. I think overall it was definitely entirely young person led, they felt the ownership.” **Youth worker**

“ Aye, they took all my suggestions into consideration, and then we all made a decision. So we were all part of it.”
Young Grantmaker

“ They asked follow up questions that make you actually think about the decisions you were making. It was really good. I feel as if I'm part of the team and I've got a crucial part in the decision-making.” **Young Grantmaker**

Some applications were approved straight away; others were approved subject to the applicant responding to follow-up questions from the Young Grantmakers, and some were rejected. A funding officer from The National Lottery Community Fund was present at this event to ensure all successful applicants complied with The National Lottery Community Fund's funding rules.

Programme content

Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund equipped the Young Grantmakers with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in each stage of the process through:

- **Theory-based learning** – Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund talked young people through different aspects of the grant-making process, including leadership, critical thinking and The National Lottery Community Fund's values and principles. However, each topic was treated as an open, interactive discussion as opposed to a one-way presentation by facilitators. Young Grantmakers were invited to share their views and opinions and ask questions at each stage.
- **Training exercises** – Youth Scotland devised different activities and training exercises to help Young Grantmakers put the theory they learned about grant-making into practice. For example, there was a Dragon's Den style exercise where young people had to design and present an idea with a proposed budget to the panel, and then they switched roles and assessed other people's ideas. This was key in teaching young people how to approach funding applications and assess budgets.
- **Resources** – Organisers shared useful information and resources with the Young Grantmakers, such as handouts, examples of application forms for other Youth Scotland funds and educational videos to supplement and reinforce learning.

There were regular breaks, energisers and opportunities for reflection throughout each event. Attendees agreed that the events were relaxed, enjoyable experiences which struck a good balance between the administrative side of the grant-making process and more traditional youth work activities like games and team-building exercises.

“ It's been quite a good balance. The leaders have been quite good at noticing whenever we need a wee energizer or a wee break.”
Young Grantmaker

“ I think there was a really good mix of different activities. It wasn't all just, 'right, we're going to read these funding applications and decide if they're going to get money or not', there was so much more personal development for the young people as well.”
Youth worker

Several interviewees commented on the skills of the Youth Scotland facilitators and how they established a safe, comfortable environment where confidence and creativity could flourish.

Attendees

Attendance varied throughout the programme. Three young people attended the first event, and three attended the residential event the following week (however it was not the same three young people at both events; one young person dropped out after the first session, and someone new joined the programme for the second event). Two young people attended the final event, one of whom was recruited mid-way through the programme and therefore had not attended either of the previous events. In total, five young people engaged with the programme across the three events.

Fewer participants were involved in the process than originally anticipated – initially, there was a target of engaging with 20 young people. Recruitment and retention challenges are described in more detail in Section 4.

Youth Scotland accredited awards

The Young Grantmakers programme followed the iLead pathway which builds young people's confidence and helps to improve teamwork, communication and analytical skills by offering opportunities to get involved in everyday leadership. Through their participation in the programme, the Young Grantmakers completed accredited youth awards; four young people achieved their Dynamic Youth Award (SCQF Level 3) and one achieved their Hi5 Award (SCQF Level 2).



Young people's contribution

All evaluation participants agreed that the Young Grantmakers' input was extremely valuable and contributed significantly to the creation of a well-thought out and well-executed funding initiative. Many interviewees were impressed with the effort, commitment and quality of input from the Young Grantmakers.

“ The young people were really engaged, thoughtful and astute. They were really good at making decisions, at expressing themselves and communicating. They got it, they were passionate about it, they saw the importance of it and they saw the implications of what this could do.”

Youth Scotland

“ They did amazingly well, they were so keen, so enthusiastic, really passionate about making a change in their communities.”

Youth worker

Evaluation participants reflected on the importance of having young people with lived experience on the panel, noting that they brought a fresh approach and new perspective to the grant-making process.

“ Young people have such a unique perspective.” **Youth Scotland**

“ Involving the people that it's impacting, you get a completely different perspective and a completely different voice. And that's crucial.”

Youth Scotland

Some specific examples of how Young Grantmakers' insight, leadership and decision-making shaped the Glas-glow Up fund are set out throughout this section.

Applications which demonstrate buy-in from young people

The Young Grantmakers felt strongly about incorporating a question into the application form about how young people had been involved in planning the funding idea. They felt it was important to demonstrate evidence for the demand for the proposed project and show it was something that young people would engage with if funding was awarded.

“ Up front and centre was the fact that young people had to be consulted in the process to apply for the funding. That was one of the key, fundamental things that the young people felt really passionate about. They needed to have that buy-in from young people. And that's ultimately why it'll be successful, because the programmes that were funded, they were young person-led.”

Youth Scotland

Shaping the funding priorities

Young Grantmakers decided that for an application to be successful, its proposed initiative had to meet at least one of the following five funding priorities:

1. Provide safe spaces for young people to gather, take part in positive activities, and seek advice.
2. Support young people to get outdoors and become more active.
3. Engage young people who are not already involved with other services or youth programmes, for example through street work, outreach or drop in sessions.
4. Provide opportunities for young people to engage positively with other stakeholders in their communities, for example through intergenerational projects or youth led events.
5. Encourage young people to improve their local area, for example through litter picks.

These funding priorities were decided upon based on honest and open discussions about young people's experiences within their local communities.

“Aye, the safe place for the young people. That was the number one priority for me. Because where I come from, where I stay right now, it is sort of safe, but it's also not because hunners of young people argue, fight, there's tons of glass about, people can fall and hurt themselves badly. So that's not really a good safe place for them.”

Young Grantmaker

“The young people are from the local area, so they understand, they know about the anti-social behaviour going on in the area. For example, one of the young people showed me a video on his phone of some young people in altercations with the police. So it's clear to see that the young people have that local

knowledge, local context. It was interesting to hear about what the issues are in terms of anti-social behaviour, what the priorities are - that's something that we wouldn't have been able to come up with because obviously, firstly we are not local, so we don't understand what's going on locally. And secondly, we don't understand the issues that young people face, what the priorities are that the young people see. I remember one of the young people was talking about a local park that was vandalised, and now they don't have access to it and how they would see that as important in their community because that's a safe space for them. So again, just a lot of context appropriate to the age group and also appropriate to their community as well which they know much better than we do.”

The National Lottery Community Fund

A straightforward, fair and accessible application process

Young people advocated for the application form to be kept accessible, concise and straightforward; the final version contained mostly closed questions, with three open ended questions where applicants were asked to provide more detail about their proposed activities and how they tied into the funding priorities.

Facilitators raised the idea of allowing video applications, however young people felt that the presentation and delivery of recorded applications could influence their decision-making and felt that written applications would be a fairer way for organisations to apply.

Expanding the geographic boundaries for funding

When designing the fund, the Young Grantmakers discussed the issues affecting their lives and communities, sharing stories about incidents they had witnessed at school and or while out with friends or family in social settings across the city. Through these conversations, the young people recognised that the anti-social behaviour they had observed, such as violence, vandalism, racism and underage drinking were not issues specific to the shortlist of neighbourhoods that The National Lottery Community Fund had targeted for funding, but were prevalent issues across the city. As a result, they decided to expand the geographic eligibility to a wider area spanning the East of Glasgow, Central Glasgow and parts of North, South and West Glasgow. The Young Grantmakers marked out their target area on a map of the city, pinpointing areas where young people congregate and local youth clubs and community centres working to address anti-social behaviour.

“Our [The National Lottery Community Fund's] view was that we would just focus on those three communities within the east end of Glasgow, and we would accept applications from organisations delivering in that area or supporting people from that area. But then what happened was that the young people wanted to widen that geographic area that we had focused on. On our map, they identified the areas that they wanted to see young people supported. So that is certainly something that was different. It was pretty unexpected, but that was what the young people wanted. So that was a good thing as well, because the young people actually decided no, we want it to be much wider than what it is currently, which was a positive in terms of them making a decision.”

The National Lottery Community Fund



“That geographic area would have been different if it was just us, the staff, deciding on it.” **The National Lottery Community Fund**

Determining successful applicants

The Young Grantmakers’ insight into the preferences and interests of local young people was essential in assessing applications. Evaluation participants agreed that it was extremely valuable to have age and community-specific insight into what would resonate most with local young people.

“Working with young people who know the area the best, they know the areas that are most in need of support. They know the areas and activities that are going to engage people. So with all that knowledge that they have of being a young person, of growing up in that area, they were able to make the best decisions. Whereas people that don’t live in that area, and don’t have that expertise of what young people would actually attend, they might say, ‘oh, young people will attend a tree planting ceremony’ or something. Well that might sound fine to us as adults, but some of the young people would be like, ‘I wouldn’t go to that’. And then, if they wouldn’t go to that, then neither would the young people that are causing some issues in the community. They were really keen on making sure it was engaging activities.” **Youth Scotland**

“I think we were talking about a radio show and we were talking about how potentially unrealistic one of the application’s numbers were, about how many young people they thought would be interested. But [other Young Grantmaker] and I gave the impression that we wouldn’t interact with resources like that, so maybe the numbers were a wee bit unrealistic.” **Young Grantmaker**

Benefits for young people

Taking part in the Young Grantmakers programme has benefitted young people in several different ways:

Increased confidence

The Young Grantmakers grew in confidence throughout each session, which was demonstrated through their increased willingness to engage with new people, share their views, present ideas and stand by their opinions.

“I just think the young people who were involved were amazing. Seeing the development in them just over those weekends, their confidence growing... It can be quite an intimidating thing to disagree with someone, or try and put your opinions across in a way that’s not confrontational, that takes a long time to learn. But seeing the young people develop it so quickly, and their leadership skills, was just brilliant.” **Youth Scotland**

“Before I did it, I wouldn’t talk to new people, I’d just wait until they talked to me. But now I can go out and meet new people and start a conversation and that. It took me out my shell a wee bit because I would never really do that, I wouldn’t stand up and talk in front of people because I get really nervous and stuff. I was just thinking, ‘I can’t do this, I’ve got too much anxiety for this.’ But then they said to me, ‘just take your time, just go for it, try it.’ And I went for it and I done it and then at the end, I was like, this isn’t really that bad and I’m just blowing it out of proportion. It’s just made me a different person. I’ve looked at stuff differently and I’ve built up my confidence, I definitely achieved that.” **Young Grantmaker**

Feelings of empowerment

Making decisions about which projects to invest in gave Young Grantmakers a sense of empowerment and control over making positive change in their communities.

“ Looking through the applications, it makes you feel sort of powerful, like knowing that whatever you're doing is helping so many other young people in different communities throughout those parts of Glasgow.”
Young Grantmaker

“ I think it's an amazing job to take young people that hadn't really been involved in that kind of decision-making process before to the extent that at the end, they were making decisions on this £40,000 pot of money. I mean, that's incredibly empowering for a young person.”
Youth Scotland

“ You can really see the value for the young people who've taken part. That feeling of your decisions and your opinions being really important is amazing for personal development.”
Youth Scotland

Being listened to

The programme presented a unique opportunity for young people from deprived areas of Glasgow to have a platform to share their experiences and represent their communities with the goal of contributing to positive change.

“ That was my main priority: to be a voice for my scheme and basically try to tell them what's happening where I come from.”
Young Grantmaker

“ I like getting my opinion across and having a voice to tell them my side of the story, and having people there listening to it and getting it written down, so that I could maybe change something.” **Young Grantmaker**

Increased knowledge and skills

Evaluation participants also noted how the programme had allowed young people to build on fundamental life skills, including communication, teamworking, problem solving and decision-making abilities.

Several participants commented on how the programme had led to greater appreciation and understanding of the youth work sector and the third sector funding landscape.

“ Young people don't normally know where all the money comes from, they just know there are programmes happening. Young Grantmakers has allowed them to understand why we can't just go on loads of trips with certain pots of money, and that certain things need to happen with it.” **Youth worker**

Positive feedback from applicants

The fund proved popular among youth work organisations in Glasgow, receiving 42 applications. A successful applicant described the application form as being straightforward, relevant and well written, with a reasonable amount of work required for the level of funding on offer.

“ The five key priority areas were dead simple and well explained. It wasn't one of those applications that needed loads and loads and loads. So it was just kind of adequate, I felt, which was really good.” **Successful applicant**

The applicant also appreciated that young people had been involved in the grant-making process, and that this had resonated well with their youth group, some of whom expressed an interest in grant-making themselves.

Partnership between Youth Scotland & The National Lottery Community Fund

The partnership between Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund worked well, with representatives from both organisations expressing appreciation for the others' expertise, commitment, approachability and responsiveness.

“ It was a really nice process working with them, because they were just so enthusiastic, and so passionate about working with young people as well, which made the programme so much easier to do.” **Youth Scotland**

“ It's been great. I feel like communication has been good. Everyone's been quick to respond and keep everyone else up to date. There's been points where we've had to go back and ask for clarification and that clarification has always come.” **The National Lottery Community Fund**



Recruitment

The most prominent challenge faced during the Young Grantmakers programme was recruiting young people to take part in the project. Several factors affected Youth Scotland's ability to recruit young people, including:

Limited geographic area to recruit from

Originally, The National Lottery Community Fund proposed recruiting participants from three areas of Glasgow where an increase in anti-social behaviour had been observed (Bridgeton, Calton, Dalmarnock). This limited geographic area made it difficult for Youth Scotland to recruit young people, given the relatively small population within these communities who were eligible to take part, and the small number of member youth groups based there. Youth Scotland provided early feedback about the difficulties in recruiting from such a narrow geographic area, and the target area was subsequently revised to include another area of Glasgow (Parkhead), however this expansion was not enough to significantly affect recruitment.

Commitment required

An additional barrier to recruitment was that participation required a commitment to attend three separate events within a three-month period. Youth Scotland noted that it was difficult to get such buy-in from young people for a few reasons: they have hectic and often unpredictable lives; some have other commitments which interfere with their participation; they may not be willing to give up their free time so regularly; or they may not want to commit to a programme with an unfamiliar activity like grant-making.

“ The nature of young people and their lives is that there's a lot going on, especially with some of the target groups we work with. Some people's lives can be quite chaotic so retention is always going to be an issue with young people because they've got so many competing priorities.” Youth Scotland

COVID-19 pandemic

While most COVID-19 restrictions had eased at the inception of the Young Grantmakers project, this was still a period of uncertainty and recovery for young people and youth groups. In addition, the Omicron variant caused a surge in COVID-19 cases in late 2021 and subsequently affected staffing levels within Youth Scotland and the availability of young people, many of whom were isolating or reducing their in-person contact with others.

Time of year

Recruitment took place in the lead up to the festive period, which can be a difficult time of year to promote events to young people, who have family commitments, school holidays and prelim exams to prepare for. In addition, many youth organisations run Christmas/Winter programmes which young people are already committed to in advance. There was also a relatively short window of time in which to recruit young people.



Implications of recruitment challenges

Participants discussed some of the implications of the recruitment struggles. These included:

- Youth Scotland spending a significant amount of time and resources on recruitment efforts.
- There was some pressure on the Young Grantmakers who did attend to remain focussed at all times and regularly make contributions and decisions, which resulted in fatigue. With greater numbers, the workload would have been spread out more, allowing the Young Grantmakers some respite from their responsibilities.
- To ensure that young people weren't greatly outnumbered by adults, The National Lottery Community Fund had a more limited presence at the events than originally planned.

Retention

Retention of young people was also a challenge; only one young person attended all three events. For most young people this was due to busy schedules or other commitments, but for one, it was due to anxiety they had around the residential event – they were not willing to do an overnight stay away from home.

“It's a challenge for some young people to be away from home and to be away from them from their home environment.” **Youth Scotland**

Youth Scotland did make concerted efforts to overcome this by offering to cover taxi fares to pick the young person up and drop them off for the sessions, but they ultimately decided to disengage from the programme.

Other challenges

Some other minor challenges were raised by evaluation participants:

- More applications than expected were received, and so the last session ran over the allocated time by about an hour.
- Young people generally require more breaks and energisers to remain focussed than a panel of professional grant-makers would. This was most evident during the stage where applications were reviewed – there were some dips in attention and energy levels during this session.
- As it was a pilot, more time was spent on planning, meetings and project management than initially accounted for.

Some reflections on learning which could be embedded in any future roll out of the programme are set out below.

1 The National Lottery Community Fund were keen to involve young people aged 13-25 from specific neighbourhoods in Glasgow in order to understand the most prevalent issues in the community and develop targeted, tailored local solutions. The geographic and age parameters caused significant challenges in recruiting participants for the project. In the future, it would be best to consider in advance which aspect of geographic or demographic focus is most important and adapt accordingly; by using larger geographical areas if the priority is the age range, or not restricting to a specific age range if the local community focus is a greater priority.

2 It was clear that the Young Grantmakers had knowledge and insight into a wider area of Glasgow than just their local neighbourhood, and as a result, they decided to expand the geographic eligibility for funding to much a larger area of Glasgow. Had young people been involved at an earlier stage of the project, this would have been apparent, and the recruitment area could have been expanded. In any future rollout, a wider geographic area to recruit young people from should be set; this would address some of the recruitment challenges and reduce the amount of time staff need to spend on recruitment, while still involving young people with local insight in decision-making. It would also allow Youth Scotland to over-recruit for the programme, giving as much chance as possible of filling spaces and making up for anyone who drops out or disengages.

3 During the early development stages of the project, The National Lottery Community Fund did some initial scoping work with youth groups operating in the proposed target areas of Glasgow, to explore potential interest in the project. Most groups consulted said they would be able to identify 5 or 6 young people who they could put forward to take part, which led The National Lottery Community Fund to believe there would be sufficient take-up to proceed with the limited geographic target area. Unfortunately, these participants did not all materialise. It is often the case that while young people express interest in the early stages, they are unable to commit to a programme for various reasons; e.g. unpredictable schedules, other commitments, illness etc. While it is important to consult with youth groups to gauge interest in a project, in the future organisers should anticipate that estimates from youth groups may be over-optimistic, and a level of attrition should be expected.

4 The Young Grantmakers who took part in the pilot greatly enjoyed the experience and expressed an interest in taking part in similar opportunities in the future. Organisers should consider making a role for them in future rollout, for example allocating them some responsibility over training a new cohort of Young Grantmakers.

5 Recognise that reviewing the funding applications will take a significant amount of time and require a lot of focus from Young Grantmakers. It is important to set aside plenty of time for this and schedule in regular breaks and energisers.

6 Alternatively, take steps to reduce the amount of time in which Young Grantmakers spend on reviewing applications. For example, consider incorporating a step where facilitators condense full applications into 1-page summaries which are then given to young people to review, or apply a stringent word limit on open questions.

7 While Youth Scotland and The National Lottery Community Fund excelled at making the content as understandable and engaging as possible, grant management and application eligibility assessments can be complex processes. A lack of understanding from young people around the more jargonistic terms like 'matched funding', 'retrospective funding' and 'statutory activities' could lead them to feel that they are not really in control. In future programmes, it would be good to make a decision about whether these more complicated terms could be avoided and more basic language used, or if more could be done to help familiarise young people with these terms.

Overall, the pilot was considered a success by evaluation participants. If learning can be applied to address some of the challenges faced throughout the programme, a wider rollout could lead to investment in initiatives which can make real differences to local communities.