



Youth Arts Open Fund

Case studies



Media Education, Film for Change

Edinburgh | £14,643



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



Media Education, Film for Change

About us

Media Education works with children and young people to support access to creative filmmaking and expressive arts as tools for participation, voice, and social change. Our work is grounded in the belief that everyone should be able to access creative processes to explore and share their identities, experiences, and ideas, and to feel a sense of belonging as valued and active citizens.

We deliver trauma-informed, professionally supported filmmaking and screening programmes that support young people who experience disadvantage, discrimination, poverty, and other barriers to participation. Many of the young people we work with have protected characteristics, mental health challenges, caring responsibilities, or lived experience of trauma and exclusion.

Our approach centres on creating safe, welcoming, non-hierarchical spaces where young people and adults learn together, share power, and work collaboratively. We support young people to see themselves as artists and storytellers, to develop technical and social skills, and to connect their creative work with wider audiences through screenings, discussions, and advocacy activity.

Our Project

Film for Change was a youth-led filmmaking project delivered in Edinburgh, bringing together 12 young people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Participants worked alongside professional filmmakers and youth workers to co-create films that explored issues important to them and amplified young people's voices.



The project was delivered over a 15–16 week programme, with weekly Friday sessions combining skills development, collaborative planning, filmmaking, and group screenings. Each session began with creative icebreakers and shared viewing of relevant films, supporting discussion, idea-generation, and media literacy. Young people then developed practical filmmaking skills, including camera work, lighting, sound, interviewing, scripting, and editing.

Through group discussion and collective decision-making, the young people chose the themes and formats of the films they wanted to make. The group produced two films: a documentary exploring the importance of listening to young people's voices, and a drama film examining youth homelessness and the additional pressures faced by young people experiencing homelessness.

"It was empowering to be able to express myself through film. I want other young people to get out of their comfort zones and feel how I did."

Young people were involved in every stage of the process, from shaping ideas and planning to filming and evaluation. Decisions about content, themes, creative roles, and audiences were made collectively, supporting a strong sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

To maximise quality and impact, professional actors were employed for the drama film. The completed films will be taken into youth clubs and schools, alongside facilitated discussions, and used as part of engagement with politicians, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

Young People

The project worked with young people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, including young people from Global South backgrounds, young carers, refugees, and young people experiencing barriers to engagement with mainstream education or youth provision.

Many participants were supported through referral routes, including youth workers working closely with the Wellbeing Hub at Tynecastle High School.

These young people often experience social isolation, anxiety, challenges with peer relationships, and difficulty engaging in mainstream classroom settings. Some participants had additional support needs, including ASD and ADHD.

Young people from Global South backgrounds described experiencing language barriers, cultural transition, racism, and the ongoing impact of trauma, including concern for family members living in areas of conflict. The project created a supportive, creative space where young people could explore their identities, share lived experiences, and connect with peers in a positive social and cultural context.

"I feel a lot more confident in general — how I talk, how I act, how I dress. I get to do things that are fun for me."

Impact

The project supported 12 young people to participate in sustained, high-quality youth arts activity.

All participants reported the following outcomes:

- Young people feel better able to express themselves through involvement in arts activities (12)
- Young people are empowered through youth-led creative activity and feel their voices are amplified (12)
- Young people develop wider transferable skills, including confidence, planning, communication, and teamwork (12)
- Partnerships between youth work and youth arts organisations are strengthened (2)



Young people described increased confidence, pride in their achievements, and the value of working collaboratively with peers and professional filmmakers. Participants highlighted the importance of having control over creative decisions and being trusted to shape work from the ground up. The project also supported young people to engage with complex social issues, using film as a way to explore, communicate, and advocate for change.