

Youth Arts Open Fund

Case studies



SiMY Community Development

Glasgow | £15,000



YouthLink
Scotland



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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SiMY Community Development

About us

SiMY Community Development supports young people aged 8–18 in Townhead and surrounding areas of Glasgow to live life to the full, achieving their aims and ambitions for themselves, their families, and their communities. Our work focuses on alleviating the negative mental, physical, and social health impacts of long-term poverty through youth work that is relational, place-based, and responsive to lived experience.

SiMY's activities support four interconnected areas of development: mental and physical wellbeing; self-confidence and self-expression; building social skills and reducing isolation; and supporting empowerment and a sense of agency over personal and community life. Many of the young people we work with have experienced trauma associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which can impact their ability to focus, regulate emotions, and engage with longer-term goals.

SiMY creates opportunities for young people to engage with creative and mindful activity, explore their experiences, and develop personal and collective agency within a supportive environment.

Our Project

The project expanded SiMY's creative provision through a multi-strand Radical Art School programme, combining learner-led taster workshops, longer creative projects, and a paid arts internship. The approach was designed to increase access to arts activity for young people facing poverty, trauma, and exclusion, while remaining flexible and responsive to young people's interests.



Short taster workshops introduced young people to a range of artistic disciplines, using external artists where appropriate. Young people then voted on which art forms they wanted to explore further, shaping the development of 4–8 week creative projects delivered outside regular youth group timetables.

Across delivery, the project focused on four main creative projects: stained glass, printmaking, puppetry and creative writing, and pottery. Alongside these projects, additional workshops were delivered during youth groups and community events, including papermaking, lantern making, flower pressing, gelli plate printing, ceramics, and collage.

"I always thought I wasn't good at art because I hate it at school, but this has been so fun and I'm really proud of what I made."

Young People

The project worked with young people aged 8–18 living in Townhead and surrounding areas, where families experience high levels of deprivation, overcrowded housing, limited access to green space, and a lack of community facilities. Many young people face multiple, interconnected challenges relating to poverty, mental and physical health, food insecurity, and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences.



Townhead's physical environment and lack of accessible community resources significantly limit opportunities for young people to socialise, organise, and engage in creative or outdoor activity. SiMY's youth-led community green space provides one of the only safe, free public spaces available to young people locally.

Youth leadership was embedded throughout the project through SiMY's FACETS model, which supports young people to shape group timetables and activities.

Impact

The project supported a total of 86 young people to engage in creative arts activity.

Young people reported the following outcomes:

- Children and young people are empowered through involvement in youth-led activities and feel their voices are amplified (80)
- Children and young people develop wider transferable skills through involvement in youth arts provision (86)
- Children and young people facing additional barriers have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities (86)

“It’s cool to know a famous artist lived where I live, it makes me like Townhead more.”

