

Youth Arts Open Fund Case Studies



Creative Stirling



**YouthLink
Scotland**



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Creative Stirling

About us:

Vision - for Stirling to be known as a centre for inclusive creative enterprise, ensuring talent from all our communities has equal opportunity to thrive.

Mission - to transform the quality of life for people and communities in Stirling through culture and creativity

Creative Stirling is a creative agency for Stirling, which asserts change through culture working with our communities. We facilitate creative interventions that inspire and instigate change, shaping new community approaches to enterprise, citizenship and climate challenge. Our outputs, underpinned by a strong belief that everyone's cultural experiences and creativity must be respected and equitably resourced, empower our community network by creating opportunities for work and skills development. We focus on working with young people and refugee families in our local area.

We have developed strong relationships within our community. We listen, respond and support them to achieve their wants, interests and needs, while encouraging participation, leadership and building trust.

We provide a variety of creativity, wellbeing and skills development opportunities for various groups and ages of people. Our long-term ambition is to support them to develop key life skills for the future, career goals and aspirations and access wider community networks.



Our Project:

Over the course of this project, we delivered 94 hours of diverse workshops, including:

- Board Game Design
- Animation
- Comic Book
- Podcasting
- Printmaking
- Crochet
- Ceramics
- Cake Decorating
- Creative-Futures: Interactive Careers Fair
- Queer-Mapping
- SFX

Each workshop enhanced young people’s mental well-being, and sense of empowerment, while amplifying voices and fostering employability skills. Throughout this initiative, we actively engaged participants, adapting the project to better meet their needs.

Our board game project has grown significantly. Initially, involving a larger group to collaboratively develop the game’s structure and purpose. Now, in partnership with Unseen Unheard and National Library of Scotland, and input from Edinburgh University professionals, we are refining the game. With additional funding, we aim to have this professionally made to be used as a tool for self-exploration and help families and friends of YP gain a better understanding of LGBTQIA+ experiences and “walk in their footsteps.”



For the last few months, five dedicated young people have been volunteering and developing the “Comin’ Oot” game, contributing between 21-50+ hours each. They’ve applied skills from animation sessions to design game elements. One volunteer noted, “these projects are crucial for young people fostering personal growth, social connections, and professional skills.”

The project has strengthened participants’ connections to their community. One participant shared, “my confidence has taken a big stride since being here. I’ve learned to communicate my ideas better and push myself to try new things.” Another added, “my favourite thing about this project has been meeting other artists and creating something that the public will see. I’ve even started volunteering at Creative Stirling. I absolutely loved this experience.”

We’ve supported several older participants to become members of the Stirling Pride committee, planning the city’s first-ever Pride event—a direct outcome of our Lavender Lives Pilot. For Pride, we’ll host a Youth-Zone showcasing project work, including Trans-Rights prints, animations, board game designs, and Queering the Map contributions. Young people have deepened their understanding of LGBTQIA+ history and rights. One participant emphasised the importance of raising awareness: “so people don’t forget how much we still need to fight for our rights.”



The young people involved have developed their creative and professional skills and developed connections with various agencies, in addition to increasing their peer group, social skills, and mental wellbeing. Participants have expressed gratitude for these opportunities, noting, "I love trying all the different creative projects—I wouldn't be able to access activities like these due to cost otherwise." Another added, "sessions have been great for socialising and meeting new people."

We've supported numerous YP with university and job applications, leading to many securing spots in their desired creative courses. Moving forward, we're preparing a comprehensive report on this project and planning its continuation. By incorporating feedback, we aim to further enhance participants' creative skills, boost employability, and promote safer, more inclusive communities.

Impact:

The project supported 63 young people facing additional barriers to access artistic and creative activities. They all reported the following outcomes:

- Feel better able to express themselves through involvement in arts activities
- Improved mental health and wellbeing through their participation in artistic and creative activities.
- Feeling empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and that their voices are amplified.
- Development of wider transferable skills through involvement in youth arts provision.

