

Youth Arts Open Fund Case Studies



High Life Highland



**YouthLink
Scotland**



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High Life Highland

About us:

High Life Highland's mission is to enhance the quality of life for communities by providing opportunities across culture, learning, sport and health and wellbeing.

The Youth Services team comprises 29 Youth Development Officers based in secondary school catchment areas across Highland. Youth Services deliver a wide programme of youth work activity based around three main areas.

Our Project:

Exploring the connection between art and activism

High Life Highland Youth Development in Lochaber partnered with Room 13 Studios; Lochaber Environmental Group and Brora Learning Zone to offer Caol Youth Group (Fort William) opportunities to participate in a new Trash Fashion and Upcycling project.



We held twice weekly drop-in project sessions where young people could learn about reducing, reusing and recycling methods and how we can apply them in our daily lives. They produce artwork themed around the 3 Rs to raise awareness of climate action (such as tote bags and mugs) and they upcycled various items of furniture to give them a new lease of life and purpose.

The group enjoyed learning about the upcycling of furniture and the different elements that can be included in design such as waxing and decoupage. We worked with Patricia Matthews of Brora Learning centre to create colourful eco badges/magnets in animal shapes made from off cuts of wood which would have gone to landfill; bunting made from old bedding with climate messages/images added and mugs to reduce plastic bottle and cup use.

The group also worked with Ellie Campbell of Keep Scotland Beautiful around Carbon Literacy and advocacy. We have also adopted a cup recycling scheme and based this in our youth centre to reduce the number of unrecyclable cups going to landfill also.

We also worked in collaboration with a local UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) fashion and textiles tutor and a group of students who ran the trash fashion aspect of project.



The young people chose pieces of clothing which would have had limited life left and were not entirely trendy anymore, redesigned and repurposed them to make entirely new pieces of clothing. They then attended the final showcase and displayed their creations and spoke with other young people about their learning, experiences and participated in conversations around fast fashion and the related humanitarian and global impact.

The young people made a variety of climate pledges such as turning down their heating at home by one degree to reduce carbon emissions and heating bills, walking more instead of asking for lifts along with adopting one meat free day per week. The project was thoroughly enjoyed by all staff, partners and young people alike.



Impact:

The project supported 30 young people facing additional barriers to access artistic and creative activities. They all reported the following outcomes:

- Feeling better connected to their peers and communities.
- Feel better able to express themselves through involvement in arts activities.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing through their participation in artistic and creative activities.

Additionally, the youth workers involved in the project report being more confident about embedding creative and artistic projects in future work with young people.

