



OCHIL YOUTHS
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

IMPACT REPORT

2022 - 2023

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Highlights

Kitchen

We secured funding to upgrade the kitchen in our base, not only did this mean expanding our cooking and baking offering to the young people, but gave us the opportunity to provide hot lunches during the school holidays. As with all our services, this is not means tested or referral based, all young people through our door have the same opportunities.

Festivals

We put on 2 Festivals of Fun, with 200 young people enjoying a day of inflatables, arts and crafts, hot dogs, candy floss, games, and more. This yearly universal outreach event allows us to engage with young people who have not attended OYCI before and start a relationship with them, as well as providing joy and fun!

Residential

This financial year saw our first ever residential trip, taking 15 young people to Oban for a weekend of leadership training and fun. The young people helped shape the trip, deciding on activities and events – beach, chippy, and a trip to McCaigs Tower. Youth Scotland facilitated the leadership programme, Oban Youth Café provided their venue in kind, and Hostelling Scotland provided accommodation. For many of the young people, this was their first trip of this kind.

AT A GLANCE

OYCI creates space and opportunity so young people can be themselves while they figure out what is important to them, and what they want to learn and achieve. We have fun, share food and make friends! Our activities give young people a voice, opportunity and decision-making power.

Our Aims

▲ Personal Development

We support young people to learn and achieve what they want in life through leadership opportunities, youth social action, life skills, peer mentorship, and accreditation.

♥ Mental Health

We support young peoples mental health in everything we do. We have trained mental health first aiders, happiness facilitators, and breath-work practitioners on staff, and we embed this across our work, as well as providing specialist mental health programmes.

● Opportunities for All

Our provision is always free to attend, all materials, equipment, and food is provided. We remove barriers to participation across everything we do and level the playing field for all young people, regardless of social or economic background.

What We Did

Regular Activities	Holiday Programmes	Skills Development
▲ ♥ ● Connect	▲ ♥ ● Cooking and Baking	▲ ● Leadership
▲ ♥ ● Drama Club	♥ ● Gaming	▲ ● Accreditation
▲ ♥ ● Fun, Food, & Friendships	▲ ♥ ● Mindful Making	Special Projects
▲ ♥ ● Super Saturdays	▲ ♥ ● Creative Arts	▲ ● Inspire
▲ ♥ ● Coding Club	▲ ♥ ● Bushcraft	▲ ● Consent Project
▲ ♥ ● Stressfree Sundays	▲ ♥ ● Play in a Week	▲ ♥ ● Creative Kinds
▲ ● Have Your Say	▲ ● Festival of Fun	▲ ● Big Ideas Weekend

Key Stats

Participation Experiences: 1693
Young People Worked With: 493
Accredited Young People: 244

Young People Registered: 162
ASN Young People Registered: 31
Lunches Provided: 152

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Accreditation and Leadership

Five young people have been working towards their platinum youth achievement award over this time period, equivalent to the SQA points of an advanced higher. For one of these young people, a traditional advanced higher was not an option, so this route has opened doors for them that may not have been available otherwise.

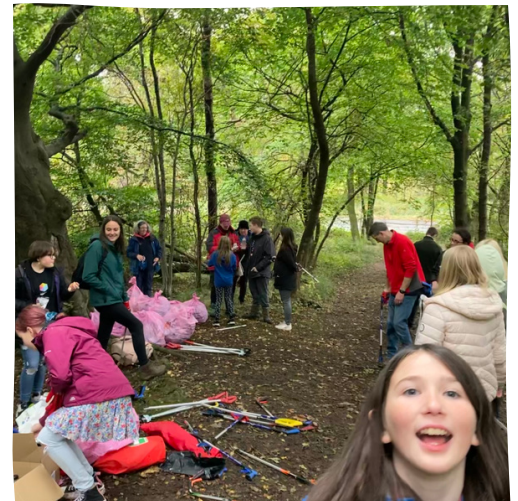
The young leaders worked across OYCI programmes providing support and youth voice to many of our strands. Though the leadership programme they gained skills such as first aid training and youth work training.

Three of the young people have taken on a paid part time role with OYCI as youth work assistants.



Inspire

We participated in Youth Scotland's Inspire programme, where a group of young people were given the opportunity to learn how to plan and budget an event, then pitch to a panel of experts for the funding required. The group decided they wanted to organise a community clean up of a local woodland area followed by a pizza picnic for all the volunteers, as well as branded reusable merchandise. The team engaged the park rangers, local businesses, and encouraged over 25 local people to show up and help. Some of these young people then went on to form our new Youth Social Action group, continuing this kind of work and learning how to practically make a difference in the community.



Have Your Say: Scottish Public Services Obudsman

We were asked by the Scottish Public Services Obudsman to consult on their new child friendly complaints procedure. We gathered a small group of our young people who came together to learn about what a complaint was, shared their experiences of complaining, and of course, eat pizza. The young people were open and relaxed with the SPSO and gave them invaluable feedback - for example, they don't want to text/whatsapp anything they are worried could be screenshot - and this insight shaped the policy, which is now being piloted across the country.





Creative Kinds

A three stage project to offer mental health wellbeing sessions to secondary school aged young people, in different settings and at different stages with their mental health.

Stage one took place in school and consisted of two sessions utilising a light-touch approach to offer young people a range of activities including arts and crafts, simple meditation and mindfulness techniques.

93% of participants rated the arts and crafts activities as a positive experience which made them feel happy, relaxed, and creative.

Stage two took place in the OYCI base in Tillicoultry. Over two sessions, we aimed to support and facilitate conversations around mental health utilising creative arts focused approaches to create a safe, valuable and engaging experience. Within these sessions we encouraged and supported the young people to create art and share their thoughts, contributing towards a short video about mental health, which can be seen here:

<https://vimeo.com/720320209/b0edcff3c5>

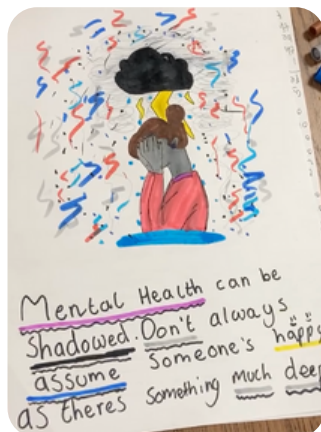
Participants taking part in stage 3 was intended to be highly targeted and the participants were referred to us by the school. They were the young people with the most lived experience of mental health issues within the project. This group was intentionally kept small, with a maximum participant limit of 8 young people. The aim of this stage was to explore the barriers young people face in managing and supporting their own mental health and to support the participants to develop their own unique self-care practice.

One participant noted they had never felt listened to in school prior to these sessions.

Another talked about the need for better understanding of anxiety from school staff;

"I personally think they just should change with how they teach people with like social anxiety, anxiety, anger issues. I think that probably needs to be led from people who are experiencing it."

From these sessions, we created a resource pack available to all participants.

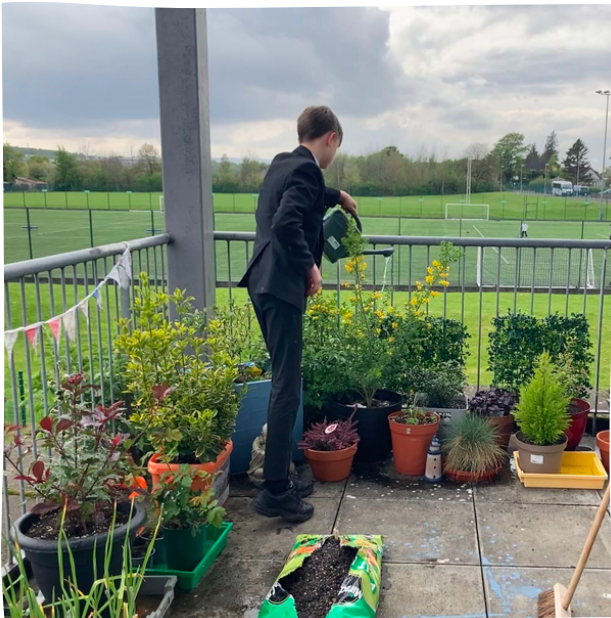




Mindful Making

We ran a series of chilled out craft workshops designed to teach young people a new skill in a meditative and relaxed setting. Crafts included knitting, embroidery, salt dough, collage, and friendship bracelets. We noted an increased calmness from the start of the session to the end, and a willingness for young people to help each other out.

One young person who rarely puts her phone down engaged with these sessions without the crutch of the phone, having her hands busy was enough to let go for a few hours.



Connect and

Fun, Food and Friendship

Connect provides a safe space for Young People aged 10-18 to meet weekly, make friends, share ideas, learn new skills and act on issues that are important to them. Connect provides upstream early intervention approach to avoid risk taking behaviour. Having a permanent base provides YP a safe alternative to socialise with other young people rather than hanging around streets at night with no real purpose.

The Fun Food & Friendship after school sessions are aimed primarily at S1 pupils to help them settle into secondary school but it is also open to any mainstream pupils S1-S6 attending Alva Academy. The sessions aim to develop confidence, build relationships and have fun. The sessions also give our young leaders an opportunity to lead on activities for their Platinum Youth Achievement Award

We have a number of vulnerable young people who have difficulties fitting in, however they have integrated well into the group, which offers a safe space for all young people. Friendships have been formed across year groups which wouldn't have happened otherwise.

Most of our young people attending experience social, emotional or physical barriers. For example, one struggles with fine motor skills but is encouraged and supported to participate and succeed. Another can be isolated from peers, preferring to distance herself from others but joins in with group activities and games. One struggles with peer relationships and is obsessed with her phone, however she has developed a good friendship with another young person in the group.

Coding

We received Raspberry Pi training and equipment which allowed us to set up a Coding Club. The small group environment works well, allowing participants to work on their own projects at their own pace, with support from our young leaders. Though coding is available in primary school, the club has given participants the opportunity to use coding languages unavailable in the curriculum, and create the projects they want to. A highlight of the year was watching them all play each others games,

One of our young people has learning difficulties and autism and has been doing well in Coding. He was the first to finish the Astro Pi mission zero challenge. He benefits from 1 to 1 support and has developed a good working dynamic with Daniel (young leader) in particular. He adds his own creativity to any project he does and has improved his understanding of coding since he joined last year.

Festival of Fun

Our Festival of Fun is a large scale event for young people completely unlike any other – it is free to attend and completely free once inside – all food, rides, activities, etc. This ensures all young people can attend and have the same experience. It was born out of the aftermath of Covid, but the need for all young people to have the opportunity to come together in the summer and have a fun day in a safe environment is necessary at any time, not just in times of crisis. For OYCI, the festival is often our first interaction with a young person, and every year we see that build, they attend the festival, then start to attend our regular provision.

Outdoor Work

Over the year we have removed financial barriers to activities such as kayaking and alpaca trekking, something the majority of our young people had not experienced with one of our youth workers noting;

'Definitely a big hit, put a smile on many faces and cheered up the local community'

Visits from the Ochil Mountain Rescue team has given our young people access to invaluable safety training and an understanding of how a rescue would take place.

One of our youth workers has trained as a forest school leader which has allowed our young people to come together for Stressfree Sundays, relaxed sessions learning about the natural environment, bushcraft, and allowing them to be creative and make friends in an environment that may not be readily available to them.



CASE STUDIES

Cara*

Cara is 18 and has been participating in OYCI activities for 4 years. She has a diagnosis of dyscalculia and a processing disorder.

Cara said;

*"I come to OYCI to meet new people and try new things and just have fun! Everyone has a nice buzz about them, everyone is really helpful and nice when you meet them and I feel like I actually get listened to. **OYCI has really helped me become more confident in myself** and not be as shy and have a place where I am able to be myself and not have to hide anything. At OYCI I feel more safe than when I am outside by myself, or when I am in school – OYCI makes me feel so safe and makes me not feel so alone, there are people who I feel I can talk to about anything and they'll listen and not judge me for what I have to say."*

We spoke to her and her step-mum, Kathleen*, about her experience;

*"Cara has grown in confidence with her own abilities since starting with OYCI. She has developed a strong sense of self-worth which is encouraged with the staff involved. Her decision-making skills have improved and we see her demonstrating kindness to others. There are a huge variety of different activities on offer. The fact that the activities on offer are free makes them inclusive to all the young people in the area. These allow the young people to sample things they otherwise may never have the opportunity to try. **OYCI also encourages the young people to develop their own uniqueness as individuals.**"*

Cara became one of our young leaders and started volunteering at our provision helping vulnerable young people who are facing similar challenges to those she has faced herself. When we advertised for young staff, she applied and started a part time position with us. Recently, we have assisted in finding her training and work opportunities as she transitions from high school.

***all names have been changed**

CASE STUDIES

Rosie*

Rosie, 13, is vulnerable, growing up in a child poverty priority group, with some evidence of trauma/adverse childhood experiences. After the family was re-homed, she experienced bullying at her new school; she struggles with boundaries, and relationships with peers and adults. Where she does form relationships, she can be clingy and attention seeking. Child A needs support to engage.

She attended our P7 transition day, during the break she opted to sit with OYCI staff rather than her peers, she disclosed the bullying, stating she was comfortable with us, but she had social difficulties with peers.

She has gone on to attend our after-school clubs – Drama and Fun, Food & Friendships (FFF). Initially at FFF, she was quite fickle about what she would engage in, working mainly on her own. Now she gives everything a go and is comfortable working in a team/group setting where required. She can still be overly familiar with staff at times, and we are working on helping her recognise some boundaries, but she is quite open and will chat to us about things going on in her life.

At Drama Club, she was a bit hesitant initially especially with things like improvisation – she would often panic when it was her turn. Support from her peers and from staff really helped her to start to engage and she has even spoken during improvisation with a smile on her face! Slowly, she has started getting used to drama which has been great to watch.

Building on these initial engagements, Rosie now attends our weekly youth drop-in and our holiday provision, her sister has begun to join in as well. Her mum reflects:

*“OYCI is absolutely amazing my girls absolutely loved everything they done with OYCI and keep begging to go to everything OYCI have available during the summer if it wasn’t for OYCI my girls wouldn’t have done anything for summer as money was extremely tight even worse now. Unfortunately without OYCI the girls would have been bored and not been able to learn new skills or new activities. **Young people and family’s need OYCI so much to give them new experiences.**”*

Rosie has had lots of fun and grown in confidence – so much so that during our October holiday sessions she felt able to support a new young person – Child A sat with this new participant and talked to them in a calm friendly manner and made them feel at ease. This showed maturity, social confidence and people skills – huge progress compared to her first attendance. Participating in OYCI has given Rosie a safe, fun space to be herself, make new social connections and build her confidence. She still has many vulnerabilities, but she is learning and growing, making new connections through her participation.

***all names have been changed**

CASE STUDIES

David* and Olivia*

David, 15 and Olivia, 17, are brother and sister. They are care experienced and were adopted by a local family. They started their journey with OYCI through our Great Outdoors programme in school, working with young people who were struggling in the classroom environment. From there, both David and Olivia chose to give other OYCI sessions a go. Their mum, Sally* says;

*When David and Olivia first came into our lives in foster care, they came from a previous foster family and were already involved in constant birth family assessments and additional services. This continued for years and involved numerous changes in workers and new people in and out of their lives regularly. They had no interest in going to sports clubs, brownies, cubs, guides, scouts etc. We always encouraged them to try, but the expectations of them when there were always more than they could manage. They have always fought against being asked to go somewhere or do something that they don't want to. But the problem with that is that there wasn't anywhere they DID want to go, which then starts to become an issue from a social aspect. However, I think they have found OYCI to be a place where they feel they can be themselves. There are no unrealistic expectations. The staff see the child. Not what the child should be. **They are accepted for who they are.** So this time when we have encouraged them to go to clubs held by OYCI, there has been little or no objection and they come back happy, instead of telling me they don't want to go back!*

Staff have seen the two go from strength to strength as part of OYCI. When David first started he could be uninterested and disruptive, now we see an engaged young person willing to help others, particularly thriving within the gaming and filmmaking programmes. Olivia could be withdrawn and unengaged, she now thrives – especially on artistic projects where she is always happy to help others. She is also willing to share her opinions on OYCI activities – whether it's helping us pick games for the switch or ideas for future projects.

Sally continues;

They come back relaxed and happy and they have enjoyed spending time doing something they want to do and socialising at the same time. From a parents' perspective, I honestly can't think of anything else that can be better than that for your teenage child. I also very much appreciate staff taking the time to communicate how they have been, how they have behaved and what they have been taking part in.

I feel that being part of OYCI has been the best thing they have ever done. As a family we feel so blessed for them to have had this opportunity. They feel part of something. A place where they belong and feel free and relaxed to express themselves and be themselves in a safe place with good boundaries and a warm, happy and fun atmosphere, with people they call friends.

***all names have been changed**

OYCI ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

37 young people, 15 parents/carers, 5 partners and 7 supporters filled in an anonymous survey about their experience with and perceptions of OYCI. The respondents were gathered from young people at sessions and from sharing the survey via our mailing lists and social media channels.

YOUNG PEOPLE

86% said they mostly or always feel safe
76% said they mostly or always feel listened to
76% said they mostly or always learn new things
75% said they mostly or always have fun

76% have completed an award through OYCI

54% would recommend OYCI to a friend

When asked "what was your favourite thing you did with OYCI this year the top responses were; Play in a Week, Cooking & Baking, and having fun.

When asked what they'd like to do with OYCI everything identified was activities OYCI already offer.

PARTNERS

100% agreed with the following statements:

I would like to work with OYCI again
OYCI deliver high quality services
I can trust OYCI
OYCI provide a good service for young people
OYCI add value to our community

Partners from Alva Academy and Clacks Council took the survey.

PARENTS/CARERS

87% said their young person has fun
80% said their young person builds confidence
80% said their young person learns things

The majority agreed their young person enjoys clubs in our base, the festival of fun, and holiday activities the most.

The most important factors were the range of activities, the young person feeling safe, and that the activities are free.

Suggestions for improvement included working in other schools than Alva, being able to regularly donate, and more splits in age groups.

SUPPORTERS

100% understood we run clubs for young people, dropping to 58% being aware of holiday programmes or accreditation.

Supporters noted a positive impact on young people in the local area as a result of OYCI's work.

Supporters came from being an ex OYCI parent, local to the area, or following us on social media.

OYCI ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

QUOTES

OYCI is very valued by parents and young people in the Hillfoots. I know parents in other school catchment areas are looking at it with envy and wondering how something similar could be set up for other areas in Clacks. - Parent

We have enhanced our partnership with OYCI this year and it has added real value to what we do in the classroom with our S2 course through soft skills and accreditation with the Dynamic Youth Awards. I always find OYCI willing to support and guide us and am looking forward to the next phase of our partnership. - Partner

OYCI offers a safe and caring environment for young people offering a range of activities supporting their growth and development. I hear feedback from families within the community talking about the opportunities available and how OYCI supports mental health for those people. - Supporter

In the current climate of financial hardship, you are providing an environment out with traditional education for children to meet, socialise, make friends, learn skills, have fun and grow as individuals. - Supporter

WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

Positives

- We provide a fun, safe environment for young people.
- Ensuring activities are free to take part in must be protected.
- Our current partners are happy with the services we provide.
- The public perception of us is good.
- the activities we provide are what young people want

What can we work on

- Developing partnerships with other schools and organisations
- External communications about our programme
- Develop a regular giving campaign

TRUSTEES



Christine Arjun (Chair/Trustee)

Christine Arjun has been a friend of OYCI from its early foundations as a CIC and then as a trustee making the journey to gaining charitable status. "I love being a trustee for this dynamic, creative and enabling organisation where young people's voices genuinely lead the direction of programmes and activities. I look forward to bringing my experience in Education and Human Rights, both within the third and public sectors, 8 years of board membership at HELM, Dundee and my commitment to young people and poverty alleviation, to the exciting work of OYCI.



Erin Seaman (Trustee)

Erin is currently a student at the university of Edinburgh, studying sustainable development. She has been involved with OYCI since it started back in 2017 and loves getting to see the amazing work they do. Erin joined the board in 2022 and enjoys working together with the other board members to ensure that OYCI is doing the best job it can do to support and provide opportunities for young people in the community.



Laura McPherson (Trustee)

Laura has worked in the third sector throughout her career in a range of roles including youth work, grants administration and communications. She is currently the Communications Officer for a Stirling based charity, and is also a trustee for a local arts organisation. She has followed the development of OYCI since its early days, and felt that becoming a trustee would be opportunity to contribute to the development of a valuable community organisation



Jill McIntyre (Trustee)

Jill McIntyre works as a project manager for the Institute of Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research at Heriot Watt University. She is a law graduate with a wealth of experience in project management, research, evaluation and policy development both self-employed and previously as Policy and Research manager at sportscotland and Private Secretary and Policy Advisor at the Home Office. Jill worked with Shona Ulrichsen on the initial young persons' consultation for EDF Energy which led to the development of OYCI. She worked with the team in the early days to scope and set up OYCI as an organisation and since then has remained involved as a volunteer on the Board. Jill lives in Edinburgh with her husband and 11 year old twin daughters Ellie and Laurie. She does several voluntary roles in her own community and would love to see an OYCI developed to benefit young people in her area too!



Niki Maclean (Trustee)

Niki joined the OYCI in 2020. With experience of youth work very early on in her career, Niki was delighted to be invited to become involved again in this area of work with an organisation local to her that is genuinely youth led. With 20 years of leadership experience in the public and private sectors, Niki loves being able to work with her fellow board members and the fantastic OYCI team to help the organisation to keep growing and developing what it is able to offer.