

## 10 INNOVATION AND CELEBRATION

Engaging a learner who has become disengaged requires the voluntary sector to think hard about purpose and the tools required to re-establish connections with learning, training or work. Often work with children, young people, school or community is bespoke and risks are taken. The sector is strong on growing and developing new approaches to entrenched problems.

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## PEN PICTURE: Children's Parliament

*"Being part of the project has helped me be more talkative, even my Gran mentioned it. And at school I think I've been more willing to read out readings and stories. I think my teachers have noticed it, they say I've been talking a bit more. It's a good thing. It really helps my relationships, 'cause I get to know people a bit better."* Project Participant

Peter was a participant on a Children's Parliament programme designed to increase confidence, enhance peer relationships and improve engagement in learning. The programme was made possible by funding from the Big Lottery's Realising Ambition Programme and allowed Children's Parliament to work in partnership with selected primary schools across East Glasgow. Participants like Peter, referred to the programme after the death of his friend left him struggling to cope in school and at home, were given the opportunity to work alongside a small group of peers to identify and express their future ambitions.

Through shared meal times, interactive arts activities and nurturing support from adults, participants were encouraged to work at their own pace to express ideas and share dreams for the future. The short-term programme incorporated group work, individual support and creative play. To conclude the project, community celebration events were organised. These were dedicated exhibition spaces where project participants had the opportunity to share their dreams for the future with their friends, family, school and project staff.

*"My goals for the week were to grow my confidence, the project definitely helped me. It helped by making me speak out loud and share my views, and make the models."* Project Participant

Children's Parliament invests time in working alongside children as co-creators of their own safe space. These spaces are nurtured through relationships that celebrate the strengths that children bring into a group. Challenges are created to support learning and extend children's horizons about what they may expect of themselves now and in the future. Through engagement in a learning space beyond the confines of a traditional classroom, vulnerable children are given an opportunity to find their voice. Training for staff in participating schools seeks to ensure that teachers are able to support participants on their return to the classroom.

Children's Parliament believes that it is through the provision of opportunities like this that vulnerable children can grow in confidence, build their aspirations, reach out to others and reconnect with the world around them.

This short film brings the project to life: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMNdwg8OseM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMNdwg8OseM)

Listen to the reflections of a class teacher who referred 2 of her pupils:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gre0djDa0d0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gre0djDa0d0)

Scotland's former Chief Medical Officer, Sir Harry Burns, reflects on his observations of the programme: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpR18VXdawM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpR18VXdawM)

## PEN PICTURE: Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) works in partnership with Sikh Sanjog Youth Service to deliver a flexible personal development programme that engages young women from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds who are at risk of leaving school with limited qualifications.

Youth workers at five Edinburgh schools offer participants the opportunity to complete DofE sectional certificates. This enables them to complete their Volunteering, Physical and Skill activities and have their achievements recognised and celebrated. Through engaging with DofE, participants reengage with education, overcome barriers and help their lives along a positive track.

The activities offered to participants are given careful consideration by the youth work team. Cultural practices are taken into account to maximise chances for the young women to participate. Peer mentoring is a key feature of the project and participants are encouraged to exchange cultural insights and become leaders in their own right.

For Physical activities, dance classes are female-only and for the Skills activities participants undertake a cultural project. By offering appropriate activities through a culturally sensitive approach, youth workers create a safe and secure environment in schools where participants can thrive and achieve their goals.

The success of the project in reengaging young women in education has resulted in The Royal High School offering the DofE Leadership programme as part of the curriculum in 2015-16.

The achievements of over 50 participants were celebrated in January 2015 at a parliamentary reception with Presiding Officer, the Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP and Minister for Children and Young People, Fiona McLeod MSP. The positive impact of achieving DofE certificates was evident to all on the night.

*"I'm thrilled to see so many diverse young women taking part in achieving and standing up for what they believe in, making a difference for the invisible voices within society. The project has been an amazing journey, seeing confidence and self worth grow in each and every one of them."*

Khaleda Noon, Youth Development Manager at Sikh Sanjog

To find out more about The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and its flexible approach to learning, please visit [www.DofE.org](http://www.DofE.org)