



Newsletter #8
Impact and Outcomes
May 2022

Generation Green is a 16-month funded project that aims to connect young people to nature, create and save jobs, and build an aspirant workforce for a green recovery.



Alison Stevens,
Programme Director

Welcome

A warm welcome to the final Generation Green newsletter.

While we have reached the end of the 16-month project, the road for Generation Green does not end.

When we started the project, the aim of the Access Unlimited coalition was to leave a legacy. Together, we have proven that our ultimate dream of reaching at least one million young people over the next five years is achievable with continued support from government and funders.

In 16-months we have laid the foundations to enable all young people to access the outdoors. Through our myriad of projects, the Access Unlimited coalition has built a wealth of knowledge and experience which we now want to use to achieve our collective dream of giving every child a night under the stars in a national landscape.

Despite launching the project during a pandemic, we adapted (continually) and delivered activities through three countrywide lockdowns and all the challenges they brought with them.

In spite of the pandemic, through our work together, Access Unlimited has reached more than 100,000 young people through Generation Green; a phenomenal figure which just begs the question, what could we achieve with further funding and without the constraints of COVID-19?

Continued on next page



As the government's youth strategy commits to adventures away from home for every young person and the DfE celebrates the importance for nature for all children, we now look forward to using our collective experience and impact and working with government and funders to ensure access to protected landscapes for all.

This newsletter is a celebration of the impact achieved, together told through the voices of just some of the people involved with Generation Green – young people, volunteers, apprentices, teachers, project managers, and many more.

It is also a small snapshot of our work together and a fitting, but small tribute to the first 16 months of Generation Green.

Enjoy

Alison Stevens, Programme Director (based at YHA)

Helping young people feel closer to nature

During 2021 Girlguiding offered a range of Generation Green-funded day and residential events to help connect young people to nature.

To ensure no-one was left out, Girlguiding also put together an activity pack for those who registered for an event but were unable to attend. The pack included instructions and the resources required to run nature themed activities; it meant that they were able to extend the benefit of the project to more young people, supporting a further 200 Girlguiding members to connect with nature.

One of the volunteers from 2nd Ryde Brownies who received



a pack said: "The packs are extremely well thought out and being outside in the fresh air is such a welcome change particularly after being virtual for nearly two years.

"The Brownies really enjoyed doing these activities. Their favourite was definitely decorating the flowerpots and planting a bean. They said they liked doing the activities outside, loved getting muddy when planting the seeds and said they felt closer to nature. One of the girls said she felt less stressed as it was nice to be in the fresh air.

"I also enjoyed doing it so much that I have used the ideas in the school with the children I work with, and they have also really enjoyed doing it too."

Young people get stuck into learning outdoors

Classroom learning was brought to life in the outdoors for more than 1,000 students who attended a Generation Green-funded day or residential field trip at a Field Studies Council centre.

Students from 28 schools took part in a range of geography and biology related activities, from walking through rivers to exploring woodlands during the fieldtrips, prompting one to say: "It was an enlightening experience and I think all students should have the opportunity to experience this."

Another added: "Students should spend more time outside rather than learning in the classroom. I understand the experiments more rather than through the work we did in class."



Nights under the stars with Girlguiding

Girlguiding members who had never camped before got the opportunity to have a night under the stars thanks to Generation Green funding.

Funding enabled Girlguiding to support a network of locally owned campsites in the North and Midlands regions. It also provided grants for young people to have their first night of camping with them for free. Additionally, Girlguiding supported the campsites with risk assessments, insurance and indemnities, allowing them to open safely during the pandemic.



To help improve accessibility for families and youth groups who wouldn't previously have had a camping experience, the campsites were also provided with essential camping items, including tented villages, outdoor sinks, lightweight tents and activity equipment such as sucker archery sets.

Elton campsite in Nottinghamshire embraced all aspects of the project. Sarah Clarkson, the Chair of the Elton Committee, said: "Being supported by the Generation Green project has brought all sorts of benefits that will help young people and leaders to have fun, make lasting friendships and learn new skills at camp and on holiday. The new bell tents, lightweight tents, pop-up tents and vital cooking equipment we received means that young people can now experience different styles of camping when they stay with us."



Reaching those who benefit the most

Independent research commissioned by YHA (England & Wales) part way through the project found that its Generation Green-funded residentials and day visits were being accessed by young people who benefitted the most.

Researchers from insights consultancy KNow Research attended a number of Caring for Nature and Connecting to Nature residentials and day visits being run by YHA. During the visits they conducted a total of eight interviews with staff from six schools who had attended.

““”

All the schools involved in the activities had a much higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

Researchers found that four of the schools had significant black and minority ethnic (BAME) populations. Additionally, all the schools involved in the activities had a much higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, ranging from 30.1% to 41.5%, compared to 20.8% nationally.

Describing the impact of the Generation Green-funded school trip on one child, Phil McNeill - Trust Enrichment Lead at Bluecoat Academy in Nottingham - said: "We had a child who had never been allowed to go on a trip at primary school because his behaviour was too bad. He wouldn't behave in lessons, wouldn't acknowledge teachers, or listen. In that moment he did, and he has changed. He is behaving amazingly in school now. He has grown so much in that short period of time."



Generation Green statistic:

**In total
Generation Green
connected over
102,500
young people
to nature**



Creating a more diverse workforce

The Outward Bound Trust's Women's Outdoor Leadership Course was one of two programmes funded by Generation Green and led by The Outward Bound Trust. It aimed to get more people into green work roles and create a more diverse workforce.

Kate O'Brien, Project Manager at The Outward Bound Trust explained: "We worked hard to create a space where women could see themselves as change makers, as leaders, able to affect change for the good of people around them, for the environment and for the planet."

By the application deadline for the course, there had been three times as many applicants as places. One of the women who secured a place was Tara who explained why she wanted to do the Women's Outdoor Leadership Course. She said: "As well as wanting to inspire the next generation, I also wanted to ask for help. Growing up in London I didn't do much outdoor adventure, so I had a steep learning curve at university."

"The outdoor industry can feel very competitive, and I was struggling with my confidence. The skills and support developed on the Women's Outdoor Leadership Course has led me to book my mountain leader assessment and forge the next step in my career."



Participants on the Women's Outdoor Leadership Course





Young people discovering how to monitor bees at FSC Preston Montford.

Improving employment and volunteer opportunities

Field Studies Council's natural history courses have proved popular, with 1,000 of the Generation Green-subsidised places being claimed by more than 700 young people.

The courses, which were available to attend both online and at a Field Studies Council centre, were designed to improve the employment and volunteer opportunities of young people, helping them improve their knowledge and practical skills in natural history and conservation.

The courses ranged from discovering amphibians to wildflower identification. One young person who took part in a place-based course said it was "...a great week with a fantastic group of people. I've made lots of really good friends and learned a lot about plant identification and invertebrates which was something that I had never done before."

Another young person who undertook an online course said: "I liked the warm and encouraging environment. Sharing work with others, seeing what everyone created from the same stimulus and being inspired by such creative minds - just lovely! Great seeing work added to the online forum and I always looked forward to the Zoom calls at the end of the week as we could share and learn together."

“““

I've made lots of really good friends and learned a lot about plant identification and invertebrates which was something that I had never done before.



Programmes inspire more love for the outdoors

Scouts Generation Green-funded programmes proved a hit from the start, with the Adventure For All programme being over-subscribed by 800%, and the in-community day visit programme reaching capacity ahead of being delivered.

The flexible, fully-funded programmes were targeted at 7 to 18-year-olds. The majority of the opportunities were offered to young people from communities less

likely to access nature and made most vulnerable by COVID-19.

Sessions within the programmes were delivered by Scouts volunteers, who benefitted every bit as much as the young people taking part. One volunteer, who ran the Birds, Bugs and Bees session, said: "Running Generation Green has been the most rewarding set of sessions I've ever ran! It has given me the chance to grow as an instructor and give groups of

children an experience they might not have otherwise had.

“““

The best part has been seeing the faces of kids light up in front of you, many that may have never been camping before or properly experienced the outdoors. Running this programme over the past year has brought me so much fulfilment and even more love for the outdoors.

Another volunteer commented: "It was a fantastic opportunity to inspire the next generation to think about the environment and constructive things we can do, and hopefully this will have a ripple effect through their actions as they grow up."



Generation Green statistic:

35%
of young people undertaking a day or residential trip were from an ethnic minority background



Youth voice is heard across the National Parks

Thirty-one young people took up the call from across UK National Parks in England to become the next generation of leaders helping to shape, conserve, and enhance our National Parks and protected spaces.

The young leaders, who are aged 15 to 30, came together for the first time at the Generation Green-funded Youth Voice Residential, held at YHA Edale in February earlier this year.

At the four-day event the group identified the purpose of the new National Park Youth Voice - 'Connecting UK National Parks young adults in the collective pursuit of a more diverse voice to address pressing environmental and social challenges.'

In the words of one Youth Voice member, "No-one is as smart as all of us." We couldn't agree more.



UK National Parks Youth Voice – Ringing Roger, Edale

Outlook changing stays in countryside

"Miss, I've been thinking. I am going to start listening in class, get a good job, get married and buy a house here and have children here to keep them away from gangs."

These were the words spoken by a Year 10 pupil from Joseph Leckie Academy who took part in a three-day Generation Green-funded social action volunteering residential at YHA Hartington Hall in the Peak District National Park. Just 24

hours earlier, the same student had admitted that they didn't know the countryside existed in England!

The residential stay in the Peak District National Park had a profound effect on all the students taking part, prompting their class teacher to write to the team at the Peak District National Park Authority when they returned to school.

She said: "The students are still talking about the trip, and we all had a great time. I also found out, through talking to another student while on the walk, that it was only the second time she had ever walked on a field (other than our Academy sports field) in her life. To say the trip was a success for our students was an understatement as I have students asking when they can go back every day!"



A photograph showing three young people sitting on the stone floor of a cave, looking out through a large opening. They are wearing dark, heavy jackets. Outside the cave, a river flows through a lush, green valley with rocky cliffs. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daylight.

Generation Green statistic:

29,660
young people
experienced a
facilitated day
or residential
trip or a self-led
experience
in nature



Reaching young people who benefit the most



Students on a night walk exploring the dark skies

At the school 39.7% of children receive free school meals, and 57% of pupils' first language is not English.

During their residential, pupils discovered local villages, explored the dark skies, learned how to cook on an open fire, cared for Tide Mills beach with a bioblitz and litter pick, shared stories and songs around the campfire and achieved a John Muir Award.

It is fair to say that the pupils were blown away by the experience with one commenting: "This is a dream come true. To walk up a hill like this. A dream come true." Another pupil commented: "It's so big. I never want to go home."

Generation Green statistic:

768
professional
or skilled
volunteer
outdoor
leaders were
trained

Collaboration is at the heart of Generation Green, not only between the Access Unlimited partners but also the wider community, enabling the project to reach young people who will benefit most from access to the outdoors.

This was the case with a Generation Green-funded collaboration between the South Downs National Park and north London-based charity The Garden Classroom.

The collaboration brought 23 pupils and three teachers from Nightingale Primary School in Hackney, north London, to YHA South Downs for a four-day winter residential in November 2021.



Students from Nightingale Primary School show off their John Muir Awards



Making sure young people are heard beyond Generation Green

Ensuring that YHA maximised its reach amongst young people through its Generation Green-funded projects, the charity engaged their 14-strong volunteer Youth Advisory Team (YAT) of young people aged under 26 with this phase of the project and as we plan for what's next.

However, YAT goes beyond the Generation Green project. It is a permanent team which collaborates with YHA's trustees and staff to ensure that young people are included in governance and in all aspects of the charity's decision making.

One of the YAT members, Louise Thompson, said: "The pandemic has impacted job opportunities in the sector. It's forced young people like me to lower our expectations and optimism. I feel strongly that Generation Green has the ability to play a key role in re-establishing the outdoor sector and inspire the next generation."



Members of YHA's Youth Advisory Team at YHA Castleton

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted, YAT finally had the opportunity to come together in February earlier this year at YHA Castleton Losehill Hall. As well as strengthening bonds within the team, they also met up with members of the National Park Youth Voice team who were staying at nearby YHA Edale.

Cressida Allwood, YHA Project Manager who helped organise the meeting of YHA's YAT and National Park's Youth Voice team said: "It was inspiring to see such a diverse range of young people brought together by a shared vision of expanding access to the outdoors."



Louise Thompson, a member of YHA's Youth Advisory Team

Generation Green statistic:

34 individuals were employed and trained through jobs or apprenticeships



FSC wildlife guides enrich a YHA residential

The Field Studies Council's marine wildlife ID guide proved a hit with Year 6 students from Abingdon Primary School in Middlesbrough, who enjoyed a Generation Green-funded residential at YHA Boggle Hole near Whitby.

The guides helped enrich the residential at YHA Boggle Hole for the Abingdon Primary students, their first residential experience away from home. Having never seen fish other than in tanks in a pet shop, the pupils were able to use the marine guide to identify some tiny 'Blenny' fish while rock pooling.

Five thousand of the Generation Green-funded colourful and water-resistant guides, designed to help young people and leaders connect with the outdoors and take on roles in the green economy, were posted to young people in June 2021.

Forty-seven per cent of people who registered to receive the guides were from the most deprived areas in England, while nearly 10 per cent of recipients identified as being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background.



Three year 6 students from Abingdon Primary School rock pooling at YHA Boggle Hole.

Generation Green is funded by the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The fund is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Join the conversation

Follow us on Twitter using **#GenerationGreen**

Share your Generation Green project stories through **generationgreen@yha.org.uk**

Generation Green is the first project to be delivered by the Access Unlimited coalition. The project capitalises on the coalition partners' combined reach of more than two million young people. Learn more at www.yha.org.uk/generationgreen

