

The Year of Young People 2018 showed us, the people of Scotland and beyond, that young people have a strong voice, innovative ideas and solutions, and are actively participating in their communities.

Louise Macdonald, CEO, Young Scot

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Forewords

We live in an age of increasing pressures on young people and apparent damage to their health, wellbeing and happiness.

Climate change, economic and political instability, sectarianism and extremism; body image, sexual, gender and personal identity; relationships; how to fulfil ambition and achievement – our complex and uncertain macro-world is a backdrop to the turbulent individual experience of adolescence at a time when social media provides both a real and distorting framework of reality for the process of growing up.

Our media is full of surveys and stories about young people in distress who feel unable to explore and realise their true potential. One of the very welcome and refreshing themes in this report is therefore the reminder of the talent, energy and creativity young people can bring to bear on the world if they are exposed to new and stretching experiences and given a real opportunity to contribute to making our society a better place.

Resonating with the future thinking of, for example, the Royal Society of Arts on what the world of work will be like in 20 or 30 years' time for today's children and young people, I am struck by the comments of those who participated in the British Council's partnership work for Scotland's Year of Young People. As well as their increased awareness and knowledge of internationalism, linguistic skills and the huge benefits of learning from other countries' experiences, their individual reflections on their own personal development, responses to challenges, and appreciation and gratitude for elements of life in Scotland we may take for granted, are the legacies that will enable them to exercise leadership skills in a future world of complexity and uncertainty. Technology may well supersede much of what is currently human work, but human connections and relationships are not reducible. Creating relationships founded on trust and co-operation across international boundaries has never been more important.

In that context, this work and this report exemplify the British Council mission and purpose in Scotland in the current age, bringing a powerful perspective to young people's education in the broadest sense, alongside the unique dimension of its focus and role in arts and culture.

There is so much potential for building on the success of the British Council's initiatives for young people, as highlighted in this report. I commend the recommendations for their ambition and drive to strengthen and develop more awareness and partnerships in Scotland in support of their being achieved. As an Advisory Committee Member, I know the small British Council Scotland team delivers a very impressive amount and range of work. Increased partner and public knowledge of what they do can only strengthen the achievement of the British Council's vision.

Given my professional background, I am particularly keen to see the British Council's aim to provide all young people in the UK with the opportunity to develop international experience and, further, to see this include not only those who have had no exposure to the world beyond Scotland but also those who live in the peripheral areas of our country and have never even been into the city centres or beyond their own communities. What undeveloped potential we have. So, I warmly welcome the recommendation to widen access – progress in this area will be an outstanding legacy of Scotland's Year of Young People and the international focus that British Council Scotland has brought to it.

Angela Morgan OBE Member, British Council Scotland Advisory Committee

The Year of Young People 2018 was a historic occasion in Scotland.

Never has a government dedicated a year to celebrating the amazing young people that contribute so much to its society. Co-designed by young people, #YOYP2018 aimed to inspire Scotland through its young people. This included celebrating young people's achievements, valuing their contributions to our communities, and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

The vision of the year was to give young people a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives. It also aimed to improve the public's perception of young people, create more opportunities for intergenerational connections, and for young people to have more opportunities to take part in positive activities and experiences.

At Young Scot, we maximise opportunities for young people to live, learn and work locally, nationally and internationally. We also support them to influence change on a global scale. Through our partnerships with the European Youth Card Association (EYCA), European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, Eurodesk, British Council Scotland and more, we support young people to embrace international opportunities and influence positive change. For example, our work with EYCA encourages young people to be socially, culturally, educationally and economically mobile by connecting them with 40 member organisations in 37 countries.

During #YOYP2019, Young Scot was delighted to collaborate with British Council Scotland through GlobeScotters. This digital information campaign helped young people to connect with other young people and organisations outside of the UK. It encouraged them to embrace the international experiences on offer – from funding opportunities, information on learning languages, through to fun videos on international foods.

The campaign was incredibly successful. Not only did young people reach opportunities overseas, but they were also able to access information on soft skills, overseas education opportunities, and explore how international experience can benefit their futures.

In many ways, the real impact of #YOYP2018 is yet to be seen – as young people continue to contribute so much to our society. However, an immediate outcome has been the Scottish Government's commitment to fully incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law within the lifetime of the current parliament. Also, the public services sector now better understands the value of involving young people in decision making. Indeed, the Scottish Government is now developing a new participation approach for children and young people. Perhaps most importantly, there is a sense that the door is now open for young people to take the lead in bringing about positive change across Scotland. Now that door is open – it cannot be closed.

The Year of Young People 2018 was so much more than a 'themed year'. It was an opportunity to inspire everybody in Scotland through our young people, who proved that they are not just the leaders of the future, but leaders now. As we move forward, we must harness the momentum young people created. We must also continue to celebrate young people, by connecting, empowering and informing them to become citizens and future leaders of the world.

Louise Macdonald OBE CEO, Young Scot

Executive summary

Creating international opportunities and connections for young people and for cultural and educational institutions in the UK is one of the British Council's five strategic priorities.

In 2018, Scotland celebrated the Year of Young People (YoYP), with 12 months dedicated to showcasing the talents, voices and contributions of people aged eight to 26. British Council Scotland provided an international focus to the year through two dedicated strands of activity. We created a series of new international mobility opportunities for young people in partnership with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; and in partnership with Young Scot, Scotland's national youth agency, we developed and delivered 'GlobeScotters', a digital engagement campaign driven by our commitment to understand the international aspirations of young people in Scotland and any barriers they perceive.

This report outlines what we achieved and what we learned from our engagement with Scotland's YoYP. It presents an overview of relevant research on the wide-ranging importance of internationalism for young people, and discusses the findings of two online surveys we conducted as part of the GlobeScotters campaign. Finally, the report presents four recommendations for developing an internationally focused legacy from Scotland's YoYP.

The following analysis demonstrates that international and intercultural experiences can benefit the lives of young people in many ways – for example, by enabling them to broaden their horizons and improve their skills in communication, teamwork and problem solving, and, as a result, enhance their prospects of gaining a job in their chosen field. This delivers

positive results for all by helping develop the future workforce and by facilitating an increased global outlook in Scottish society. These priorities are recognised at the highest levels: a key pillar of Scotland's Economic Strategy notes internationalisation as one of four priority areas for building a stronger, fairer and more prosperous nation, and in Scotland's International Framework, the Scotland being regarded as a good global citizen and an outward-looking nation to its international ambitions.

The results of our GlobeScotters surveys tell us that 84 per cent of the young people who responded consider it important to have international experiences and engage with other cultures. Seventy-two per cent believe it is important to learn a new language, and 54 per cent recognise that learning a new language can benefit their future careers. However, less than half (48 per cent) would consider studying a language at college or university. When asked if they hope to study or live abroad, 69 per cent said they do, yet when asked if they would live in a country where they could not speak the language, they were split 50/50 between yes and no. When it comes to applying for international jobs, 53 per cent said they would not be comfortable competing against young people from other countries.

Taking these findings into account, we offer the following recommendations for enhancing young people's access to international and intercultural experiences:

1

Options should be explored for enabling the continuation of an online platform to promote international opportunities and language learning in a way that responds to the aspirations and interests of young people. The findings of our GlobeScotters surveys reveal both the appetite for and the importance of promoting international opportunities and language learning for young people. This is especially important for those who may not otherwise come across international opportunities or who do not consider such opportunities to be an option due to economic or societal barriers.

2

Existing funding streams should be strengthened and new routes explored to support the provision of international and intercultural opportunities for young people. These should be accessible and delivered on a long-term basis, with an emphasis on widening participation in order to benefit those who may be facing economic or societal barriers. More generally, the Erasmus+ programme has been instrumental in this area and the British Council believes the UK should seek to remain a full Erasmus+ programme country after the UK leaves the European Union.

3

Partnerships should be strengthened with third sector and civil society organisations to develop widening access-focused international and intercultural opportunities for young people. These organisations have well-developed networks and a wealth of experience, which can be applied to making such opportunities accessible to the greatest number of potential beneficiaries. We should engage stakeholders in Scotland's youth sector to inform future strategy in this area by building on the learning, insights and evaluation we have gained through the international learning opportunities and survey results that are discussed throughout this report.

4

Options should be explored with the further and higher education sectors to better promote the career benefits of studying languages at college and university. Our findings demonstrate that a significant proportion of young people do not see a clear career benefit in studying languages at the levels of further and higher education, yet they do think that gaining language skills is important to their future career prospects. There is therefore a need to better articulate the wider benefits that can be gained by studying languages at college and university, and options should be explored with further and higher education stakeholders to promote this to prospective students.

Eighty-four per cent of the young people who responded to our GlobeScotters surveys consider it important to have international experiences.

Introduction

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Scotland's Year of Young People

In 2014, the Scottish Government announced that 2018 would be the Year of Young People (YoYP), making Scotland the first country in the world to dedicate a full year to celebrating young people.

The year aimed to give young people aged eight to 26 a platform to talk about the issues affecting their lives, showcase their talents and create a more positive perception of their contribution to society.

The Scottish Government commissioned three organisations – Children in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot – to engage young people in co-designing the year, a principle that remained central throughout its development and delivery. Hundreds of young people were consulted and together they identified six key themes to guide all YoYP activity:

1

Culture

Share and celebrate young people's talent and contribution to Scottish culture and arts.

2

Education

Allow young people to have more say in their education and learning.

3

Enterprise and regeneration

Celebrate young people's role in innovation, entrepreneurship and the Scottish economy, and make Scotland a greener and more pleasant place to live.

4

Equality and discrimination

Recognise the positive impact of young people in Scotland and encourage them to take the lead in challenging all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

5

Health and wellbeing

Make sure young people have the chance to lead healthy, active lives and understand the importance of mental health and resilience.

6

Participation

Give young people the chance to influence decisions that affect their lives.



A group of 35 young people were appointed to take these recommendations forward and ensure the voices of their peers were represented and listened to throughout the year. In addition, over 500 youth ambassadors promoted activities and opportunities in their local communities, with the aim of changing negative stereotypes of young people.

Our involvement

British Council Scotland recognised the value and potential of the YoYP. As the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, one of the central planks of our work is to ensure that our children and young people experience meaningful international opportunities as part of their development. By drawing on and applying our expertise in internationalism to the YoYP themes of Culture, Education, Equality and discrimination, and Participation, we focused our engagement on two main priorities:

1

Creating new international experiences and opportunities for young people in Scotland through specific grants and projects, leveraging existing initiatives and the support of our international network of offices.

2

Celebrating, encouraging and promoting internationalism among young people in Scotland through a new digital engagement platform and campaign delivered in partnership with Young Scot.

In order to effectively develop and deliver these priorities, we worked with Adopt an Intern to develop a paid internship for a young person to work alongside our Communications and External Relations Manager. We also established a specific budget to support our YoYP work.

Over 500 youth ambassadors promoted activities and opportunities in their local communities, with the aim of changing negative stereotypes of young people.

Creating, enabling and supporting international experiences

The importance of international experience to young people

In the context of this report, and within the wider work of the British Council, the term 'international experience' refers to sustained, cumulative encounters with people from other countries and cultures. This may take the form of engaging with people in communities in Scotland – through virtual connections with people overseas or through periods of time spent in another country engaging with local people, language and culture. The aim of such experience is to develop and support mutually beneficial understanding between people of different countries and cultures.

Existing research makes a strong case for the importance of international experience for young people and society. A report by Universities UK International (UUKi: 2017a) found that students returning from outward mobility projects had more ambition, improved teamwork and communications skills, and 'massively increased' self-confidence. These are skills which the Confederation of British Industry (CBI; 2010) and Think Global and the British Council (2011) specifically highlight as being valuable to employers. According to Dr Douglas Bourn (2008), international experience allows young people to develop the ability to work with people from different cultures, better understand people from different backgrounds and adapt to new perspectives and ways of doing things. International experience also provides young people with the opportunity to immerse themselves in language learning, further improving their CV (CFE Research and LSE Enterprise, 2014).

These findings are backed up by British Council (2018) statistics which say that young people who participate in international mobility have better job prospects than those who do not and are 50 per cent less likely to experience long-term unemployment. As a result, the benefits of international experience are not limited to individual career development: improved employment rates and opportunities for trade on international markets have a direct, positive impact on our whole economy and our ability to 'move towards a more global future' (British Council, 2017), while increased intercultural awareness and understanding benefit our wider society.

In Scotland the Children and Young People's Panel of Europe recently made recommendations to Scottish, UK and EU Governments concerning the future of accessing international outward mobility opportunities post-Brexit (Children in Scotland, 2018). The panel, consisting of 19 children and young people aged eight to 19 from across Scotland, considers outward mobility programmes to be very important; however, many feel that such opportunities are only open to young people enrolled in higher education and are less accessible to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The panel recommends that more funding should be allocated to encourage and support those from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply for these opportunities and programmes. This mirrors a recommendation from UUKi (2017a) regarding the importance of targeted funding for international mobility opportunities and a specific focus on those who need the most support.



Specifically addressing the lack of access that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have to international opportunities, the British Council and Demos' *Next Generation UK* report (2017) recommends building languages into apprenticeship schemes and improved support for international visits and exchanges. The report proposes a cross-sectoral approach from schools, further and higher education institutions, and civil society organisations is necessary to improve engagement in international opportunities. This suggestion is mirrored in a recent report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG, 2019), 1 which

contends that government and businesses must work together with education institutions to support young people to develop language skills and intercultural understanding.

Considering the above research alongside the strategic aims of the British Council and YoYP, we harnessed the reach of our global network and that of our external stakeholders in the sectors of arts, education and society to create new opportunities for young people in Scotland to gain international experiences. Together we facilitated six international experiences for 15 young people from across Scotland.

Young Scot in Strasbourg

In June 2018, we funded the participation of a Scottish delegation to the European Youth Event (EYE18) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. The delegation consisted of four members of Communic18, the group of young people tasked with co-designing the Year of Young People, two Young Scot staff and our YoYP intern. The event saw over 8,000 young people and decision makers from across Europe gather to discuss and drive ideas for the future. In addition to attending a full schedule of plenary discussions and workshops, the four Communic18 members delivered their own workshop, which introduced the YoYP to their European peers. The visit enabled the young people to develop a network of international connections and peers by sharing Scotland's experience of participatory policymaking for young people, which included a workshop session on the YoYP itself.

Lauren Asher said of her visit to EYE18 in Strasbourg:

Through the trip I was able to challenge myself, develop my understanding of the broader issues affecting my generation and overcome my fears. It was the first time I had been abroad since I was very, very young and so it was rewarding to be able to experience new cultures with new people. I loved having the opportunity to develop my linguistic skills, which I hope to continue using in future.



Scotland-Zambia youth arts exchange.

Photograph © British Council

Community Jobs Scotland in Accra

In the next CJS collaboration, we provided funding for two youth workers from Crossroads Youth and Community Association in Glasgow and Heart & Sound Ltd in Dunfermline, to visit education and community development charities in Ghana and gain knowledge of the sector that they could bring back to Scotland.

In a reflective interview about his trip to Ghana,

I feel like now I can see how lucky I

Youth Worker Jack said:

Community Jobs Scotland in Washington DC

Working together with the Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) programme – which assists young people who are furthest from the labour market into work and is delivered by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations working in partnership with the Scottish Government and Scotland's third sector – we provided funding for young CJS staff members to attend international knowledge and skills exchange visits relevant to their careers. In the first of these, two hospitality assistants from Callander Youth Project visited the social enterprise DC Central Kitchen in Washington DC. They spent a week volunteering in the kitchens, meeting staff, attending information sessions and gaining understanding of how an overseas social enterprise operates.

In a reflective interview about her visit to DC Central Kitchen, Hospitality Assistant Eilidh said:

I've done a lot of self-reflection looking at how grateful the people we met are for what they have and the opportunities they've had. So I'll definitely be taking back a sense of what I have to be grateful for, and the opportunities I have because of where I work. The trip was full of amazing opportunities and information. I'm so grateful I was able to come here and see how they do things!

am every day for the opportunities that living in Scotland has afforded me. I can recognise the struggles that others go through and still have a friendly smile and great attitude towards others.

Community Jobs Scotland in Los Angeles

In the final CJS trip, a young navigator from Braveheart Industries in Glasgow, a social enterprise which supports young people who have criminal convictions to find work, flew to Los Angeles to shadow staff at HomeBoy Industries – the organisation which provided the model for Braveheart – and bring back learning and mentoring knowledge to the programme in Glasgow.

Reflecting on his experience, Calum said:

[The trip] was so beneficial to my practice as a navigator and has really helped my work here in Glasgow. I spent four days shadowing a navigator and constantly learning and building my knowledge of how to mentor people away from a chaotic lifestyle. This was amazing as I'm tasked with developing the programme at Braveheart and this has given me a great foundation to build on.

Nature writers in Munich

Working with colleagues in the British Council Literature Team and at the British Council in Germany, we supported five young writers to attend the British Council Nature Writing Seminar with Robert Macfarlane in Munich in June. Chosen through an open call, which received 25 applications and was co-judged by the writer Malachy Tallack, the young writers engaged with some of the genre's leading proponents around the theme of 'The borderless phenomenon of the Anthropocene'. The workshop allowed the young people to engage with new literary forms and themes, experience the nature writing scene in Germany and develop their writing skills.

Maria Sledmere, one of five young writers selected to attend the British Council Nature Writing Seminar in Munich, said:

One striking aspect of the seminar was its consistent attention to international perspectives. While the writers were all British, each seemed keen to discuss nature writing that diverged from Anglo-American traditions. Despite my unfortunate monoglot status, I now feel more confident reaching out to works in translation.

Artists in Brazil

For the last trip of the year, we worked with Glasgow Women's Library to send a young female artist to the Women of the World (WoW) festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as part of a wider British Council Scotland delegation. WoW celebrates the achievements of women and girls, as well as shining a light on the obstacles they face across the world. The young artist attended a full itinerary of performances and workshops, bringing back valuable learning and inspiration which will be applied to her work in Scotland, much of which is focused on participatory arts.

Emily Beaney attended WoW in Rio de Janeiro with a British Council Scotland delegation in November:

[The trip] has given me the chance to gain a more global perspective and the drive to develop a professional international network. It has challenged my thinking and expanded the perimeters of my creative practice in many exciting new directions. Thank you!



We provided funding for two youth workers to visit education and community development charities in Ghana and gain knowledge of the sector that they could bring back to Scotland.

GlobeScotters: a digital campaign

Our partnership with Young Scot

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At a time when the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is vital that young people are supported to equip themselves with the skills they need to succeed and contribute. With this in mind, we partnered with Young Scot, Scotland's national youth information and citizenship charity, to develop GlobeScotters, which was driven by our commitment to understand the international aspirations of young people in Scotland and any barriers they perceive in this context. Not only did this partnership allow us to harness Young Scot's expertise in youth engagement and participation, it connected us to their network of Scottish youth organisations, and, perhaps most importantly, it enabled us to communicate directly with their vast network of young people across Scotland.

Globe Scotters

Our approach

The decision to engage young people through a digital engagement campaign was informed by existing sector research calling for further promotion of the benefits and overall importance of international experiences (CFE Research and LSE Enterprise, 2014). Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility: A picture of participation (UUKi, 2017b) highlights the need to communicate the value of outward mobility to students as a key approach to increasing participation, and pinpoints digital marketing and social media as the most useful tool for this. The importance of promotion has since been further underlined by a 2018 report on Brexit by the Children and Young People's Panel on Europe (Children in Scotland, 2018), which recommends making it easier to find out about international mobility opportunities such as youth work and volunteering that support young people who are not in university to travel.

Initially a six-month-long campaign, GlobeScotters launched in May 2018 and stayed active until December 2018. The campaign webpages were hosted on a micro-site within the Young Scot website and content was disseminated through the existing Young Scot social media channels, a strategy which recognised the organisation's expertise in packaging content for young audiences. British Council Scotland supported Young Scot's social media activity and created content for the site using the full range of assets, research, projects and networks from across the British Council network.

Campaign aim and structure

The central aim of the GlobeScotters campaign was to inspire the next generation of Scots to fulfil their potential by embracing international experiences and opportunities available to them at home and abroad, and to seek their views on what barriers they might face. Building on the above research on the benefits of international

experience, GlobeScotters aimed to enrich the lives of young people across the country by improving their education and employment prospects, and encouraging them to make new cultural connections. Leading on from these aims, the content of the campaign was framed around three phases, each lasting approximately two months.

Phase 1 **Skills**

The first phase focused on the skills that can be gained by international experience. Content for this phase covered attributes including communication, teamwork and confidence, as well as providing practical advice for young people travelling abroad.

British Council (2015) research tells us that people who have studied, worked or travelled extensively are more likely to describe themselves as having transferable skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, communicating and working with people from different countries or cultures. The British Council report Scotland's Future Workforce (2014) shows that employers seek young people with high levels of soft skills and the ability to adapt in a global working environment, attributes that, according to CFE Research and LSE Enterprise (2014), are directly linked to taking part in international educational mobility programmes such as Erasmus+.

Phase 2

Education

The second phase centred on international education opportunities available to young Scots, with a specific focus on the importance of language learning. Content promoted the benefits of studying abroad, testimonials by young people with international experience and helpful tips for language learning.

CFE Research and LSE Enterprise (2014) found that almost 60 per cent of respondents with university study abroad experience agreed that it encouraged them to continue studying, with over half saying it improved their grades.

Phase 3

Careers

The third and final phase focused on the benefits that international experience can have on a young person's career prospects. Content for this phase highlighted the benefits of working abroad, the ways in which language skills can improve employment prospects and the importance that employers place on global skills.

Campaign content and monitoring

The voices of young people were central to the campaign, an approach underlined by a UUKi report (2017a) that specifically highlighted the value of testimonials of returning students to place student voices at the centre of communications.

In addition to a range of testimonials from young people, GlobeScotters content took the form of advice articles, videos and competitions. Selected campaign content was tied to Young Scot Rewards, through which participants engaged with content in order to gain points and win prizes. In addition, two surveys were run across the campaign to gain a wider picture of the opinions of young people on international experience, language learning, international careers and their future plans. Both surveys gained significant engagement and the results inform the recommendations made in this report.

In addition, Young Scot regularly shared monitoring in the form of digital and social media analytics, as well as qualitative feedback from young people engaging with the campaign. This information will be presented alongside the survey findings to draw conclusions on how to use the learning gained in future projects and strategy.

Campaign engagement

Young people creating content

We had significant engagement from young people, external organisations and British Council staff in creating content. Overall, 50 individuals contributed content for GlobeScotters in the form of articles, videos or interviews. They included young people who participated in the funded international visits as well as those we connect with through working with youth groups, arts organisations and educational institutions across Scotland.

Website statistics

Between June and December 2018, the GlobeScotters homepage received almost 5,500 views. Social media engagement figures show that GlobeScotters Twitter posts showed up on users' timelines almost 130,000 times, while the combined reach for Facebook posts was almost 40,000. Campaign-related posts on Instagram had a combined reach of over 17,000, while Snapchat reach hit almost 6,000. Overall, GlobeScotters allowed us to extend the reach of British Council Scotland's digital presence by around 30 per cent, which is directly attributable to connecting with younger audiences.

GlobeScotters Surveys

The first survey published on GlobeScotters contained 12 questions and focused on young people's opinions in relation to the importance of international experiences and engaging with other cultures. This survey received 638 completed responses and 222 incomplete responses.

The second survey published combined questions about education and careers, and consisted of 19 questions. This survey received 376 completed responses and 161 incomplete responses.

The figures which follow represent the results of the completed responses only.

Age and gender breakdown of respondents

The age breakdown of respondents for both surveys was very similar, with approximately 80 per cent of respondents being aged 12 to 17, and almost 20 per cent between 18 and 26+. Just three per cent were aged 11 or younger. This generally reflects the profile of Young Scot's typical audience, which is largely between the ages of 12 and 17.

The gender breakdown tells a similar story for each survey, with a majority of respondents identifying as female: 65 per cent in survey one; over 70 per cent in survey two.



Survey 1: International and intercultural experiences

Opinions on Scotland and the UK

The majority of respondents (64 per cent) in survey one think of Scotland as an international country. A larger majority (68 per cent) think of the UK as an international country.

How important do you think it is for young people to have international experiences?

The majority **(84 per cent)** indicated that it is either *important* or *very important* to have international experiences. The most common reason for this was to experience and/or learn about other cultures. Other common answers included the importance of gaining world knowledge and growing as a person.

How important do you think it is for young people in Scotland to be interested in other cultures?

Again, **84 per cent** believe it is either *important* or *very important* to be interested in other cultures. Common reasons included the chance to better understand people and to gain knowledge about the world.

Has social media affected your view of other countries?

57%

said social media has **positively** affected their view of other countries. The most common reasons for this were that social media is useful for learning about other cultures and gaining world knowledge, and it encourages them to travel.

16%

said social media **negatively** affects their view of other countries/cultures. The most common reasons for this were that social media only focuses on the negative things happening in other countries and increases negative stereotypes of people from other countries.

Survey 2: International education and careers

The importance of language learning

Seventy-two per cent indicated that they think it is either *important* or *very important* to learn a new language. The most common reason given was to better communicate with people around the world, followed by the benefits of language skills to opening up job opportunities.

The most likely languages to learn

The languages that young people are most likely to learn are:

Spanish 33%

French 21%

German 11%

Mandarin 9%

Gaelic 6%

Japanese 5%

Italian 5%

This largely reflects the findings of the British Council's Languages for the future report (2017), which shows French, German and Spanish to be the languages most commonly spoken by Brits and most taught in UK schools. However, despite the report highlighting Arabic as the second most necessary language for the UK in the next 20 years, the language was mentioned just seven times by young people. While this could suggest lack of interest in the language, it might also reflect the lack of access to Arabic learning in most schools in Scotland.



Scotland–Zambia youth arts exchange.

Photograph © Hot Chocolate Trust

What do you think of language teaching in school?

61 per cent

indicated that language teaching in schools is *good* or *very good*, with many noting the skills and knowledge of their language teachers as a reason for their positive response.

30 per cent

of respondents indicated that language learning in school is average or below average. The most common reasons given were lack of choices in which languages pupils can learn and only basic terms.

Would you consider studying a language at college or university?



said they would not consider studying a language at college or university. The most common reasons given for this included a lack of interest, a preference to study something different and languages not being relevant to their future career.



of respondents said they would consider studying a language at college or university, most commonly citing the benefit that languages can have to their careers.

This split in opinion suggests that there is a disparity between how young people view languages in relation to their future career preferences.

Future careers

Fifty-four per cent indicated that learning a language is either *important* or *very important* to their future career. The most common reasons included having a competitive edge when applying for jobs, working in an environment that may involve speaking to people from different backgrounds, being able to travel and opening up more job opportunities.

When asked what most commonly puts young people off having an international career, *lack of language skills* was selected by **53 per cent** of respondents, while **55 per cent** felt that *distance away from home* is a barrier. Forty per cent indicated that *cost* and a *fear of the unknown* would also be barriers.

Finally, 53 per cent indicated that they would not be comfortable competing for international jobs against young people from other countries, the most common reasons for this being a lack of confidence and not being able to match the language skills of young people from other countries.

Living abroad

988%

of respondents have not studied or lived abroad; however, 69 per cent said they want to at some point in the future. When asked whether they would live in a country where they can't speak the language, figures were split between 50 per cent yes and 50 per cent no.

Recommendations

British Council Scotland's overall aim in engaging with the YoYP was to encourage young people in Scotland to embrace international experiences, connect with other cultures and engage with language learning.

From the research highlighted in this report, the importance of these three objectives is clear. Not only does international experience benefit the social, educational and working lives of our young people, it boosts our economy and creates a more confident and welcoming society. In our increasingly interconnected world, and in a time of significant political uncertainty in Scotland and the UK, international experience and intercultural understanding are vital to our future success.

Importantly, the findings from the GlobeScotters surveys show that young people largely agree.

They consider international experience and intercultural understanding to be important. They acknowledge the career benefits of language skills. As a generation growing up online, they are acutely aware of the need to communicate with people across the world, and they express enthusiasm about studying, working and living abroad in the future. It is with this in mind that we list the following recommendations to further develop the work that, together with Young Scot and our network of stakeholders, we started in the YoYP.

Recommendation 1

Options should be explored for enabling the continuation of an online platform to promote international opportunities and language learning in a way that responds to the aspirations and interests of young people.

The findings of the GlobeScotters surveys tell us that young Scots consider international experience and intercultural understanding to be important personal assets for better understanding their place in the world. While most of our respondents indicated that they wish to spend time living, working or studying abroad in the future, existing research tells us that young people want to be able to access advice on funding and opportunities, and engage with testimonials from those who have already taken part in international experiences. This is especially important for those young people who may not otherwise

come across mobility opportunities or who do not consider international mobility an option for them due to common barriers such as finance or care responsibility.

Our surveys suggest that, while the majority of young people consider language learning to be important for their careers, less than half would consider studying a language at university. This statistic is more concerning when we see that less than half of our respondents would be comfortable competing for international jobs against young people from other countries due to a lack of language skills.

GlobeScotters offered an engaging platform which connected to and addressed some of these concerns. The survey results suggest there is more to do in this space to further enable young people in Scotland to connect with international and intercultural opportunities beyond 2018.

Recommendation 2

Existing funding streams should be strengthened and new routes explored to support the provision of international and intercultural opportunities for young people.

The importance of international experience for the personal lives, education and career prospects of young people has been made clear in this report. By working with a range of external organisations across education, arts and society during YoYP, we have provided productive, meaningful overseas experiences for young people across a range of sectors and locations in Scotland. The testimonials of these young people talk of career-changing, confidence-building experiences from which they will take learning home with them. It is our recommendation that increased specific

funding for such international experiences is provided on a longer term, with specific emphasis on widening participation of international mobility and targeted funds which will benefit those young people facing barriers, financial or otherwise. Not only will this improve the life experience of our younger generation, the results will have a positive effect on developing the Scottish economy at home, and in doing so offer a corresponding link to the Scottish Government's international priorities as noted in Scotland's Economic Strategy and International Framework.

More generally, we recognise that the Erasmus+ programme has been instrumental in this area and we believe the UK should seek to remain a full Erasmus+ programme country after the UK leaves the European Union.

Recommendation 3

Partnerships should be strengthened with third sector and civil society organisations to develop widening access-focused international and intercultural opportunities for young people.

Linked to the previous recommendation, options to partner with third sector organisations to create widening access-focused international opportunities should be explored. Scotland has over 24,400 registered charities, many of which are dedicated to improving the lives of young people, and they have specific expertise in how to reach those who might otherwise miss out on international experiences, such as young people from communities affected by disadvantage. The success of our partnership with CJS shows that there is an appetite for developing such experiences to support youth skills and

employability, and options to expand on this partnership should be explored. Partly as a result of this outcome, British Council Scotland developed a legacy project from the YoYP, centred on a learning exchange for youth community arts groups in Scotland and Zambia. This saw ten young people from Scotland visit Lusaka for a week of collaborative activities in June 2019. The project partners in Scotland were British Council Scotland, Creative Scotland, Young Scot, Hot Chocolate Trust and Y-Sort-It. Their counterparts in Zambia were the British Council in Zambia, Global Platform, Circus Zambia, Barefeet and Modzi Arts. Evaluation of the exchange is currently being undertaken, and the results will be shared in due course in order to provide direction for any follow-up activities or future British Council Scotland projects of this kind.

Recommendation 4

Options should be explored with the further and higher education sectors to better promote the career benefits of studying languages at college and university.

Our findings demonstrate that a significant proportion of young people do not see a clear career benefit in studying languages at the levels of further and higher education.

yet they do think that gaining language skills is important to their future career prospects. There is therefore a need to better articulate the wider benefits that can be gained by studying languages at college and university, and options should be explored with further and higher education stakeholders to promote this to prospective students.

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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all the young people who engaged with us and our partners throughout the Year of Young People by participating in international experiences, writing articles, creating content, providing testimonials, completing our surveys and visiting the GlobeScotters campaign, including Mikaela Aktag, Emily Beaney, Michelle Bell, Kate Chambers, Patrick Clark, Jack Collins, Alyssa Faulkner, Abby Gray, Toni Greig, Liga Gutane, Emma Maruse, Eilidh MacLeod, Patrick McCafferty, Ashley Marie Meehan, Weronika Opalka, Hannah Poyner, Cahle Shirkey, Maria Sledmere, Zara Turner, Lois Wappler, Teghan Williamson and Sarah Wood.

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We would like to extend our gratitude to all the partners and stakeholders who helped us bring an international focus to Scotland's Year of Young People, including Young Scot, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, National Youth Arts Advisory Group, Communic18, Creative Scotland, Callander Youth Project, Glasgow Women's Library, Malachy Tallack, Y-Sort-It, Hot Chocolate Trust and Recoat.

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Not only does international experience benefit the social, educational and working lives of our young people, it boosts our economy and creates a more confident and welcoming society.

