Where we are...

Where we are... is a UK-wide programme with and for young people aged 16–24. It helps them work on cultural projects in their local areas. The programme is managed by the British Museum and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. A detailed evaluation report was produced by Iain Watson and Catherine Hearne. This is a summary for young people who are very welcome to access the main report for more detail.

The goal of the programme is to involve young people facing varied challenges and who don’t usually take part in cultural activities. They want to work together with these young people to create projects that are meaningful and interesting to them.

Each project is designed for a specific geographical area and is based on what the young people there want and need. It’s a team effort involving a local museum or cultural organisation, a charity, and the young people themselves. They work together to figure out what the project will be and how to make it happen.

The programme has three main aims:

1. To help young people get involved in cultural activities by removing obstacles that might be in their way.
2. To make young people feel empowered and able to make a difference in their communities.
3. This report is an evaluation of how the programme worked during Year two (2022–23). They looked at what went well and what could be improved for the next year. They also talked to the young people and the people running the projects to get their opinions.

In each location, they worked with different groups of young people. In Bury, the young people were interested in arts and creativity, while in Barnsley, many of them had less experience with creativity but had connections to children’s services. In Hackney, the young people were working with a group called Voyage Youth.

The main report talks about how the programme motivated the young people to join and stay involved. Some were interested in arts, some wanted to make a difference and others wanted to improve their skills. They were paid for their time, but the money was not the only reason they took part.

The programme also helped the young people feel more confident. In Bury, the young people felt happier and more creative after taking part and were motivated to campaign against the closure of a museum they cared about. In Barnsley, they worked on expressing themselves and making choices, which improved their confidence. In Hackney, the young people were motivated to get involved in how the statue of a man who had made part of his money from investing in the transatlantic slave trade should be moved legally.

Overall, the programme wants to help young people who may face challenges to have more opportunities to be creative and get involved in their communities.

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Locations

**Barnsley**
In Barnsley, the young people had fewer opportunities for creative experiences before this project. The partners wanted to help the young people learn new skills and overcome barriers to participation.

**Bury**
In Bury, the young people were described as creative. They learned to express themselves through writing, debating and art. Some young people became more interested in museums and even thought about careers in the cultural sector.

**Hackney**
In Hackney, the project had a focus on creativity and working with architects. Some young people didn’t think they were creative at first, but they enjoyed working with different media. They felt empowered to speak out about important issues in their community.

Conclusions

Inconsistent recording meant there were challenges evaluating the project’s success. However, overall, the young people felt more confident, motivated and creative after participating. They even had a sense of agency, which means they felt they could make a difference in their communities.

In conclusion, the *Where we are...* project was successful in helping young people overcome barriers, become more confident and creative, and feel like they could make a difference in their communities. The Year three project can be improved by involving the project teams in the evaluation process, providing even more support and opportunities for the young people, and creating two-way learning experiences with the British Museum staff.