



Celebration and impact report

Delivering more than 115,000 opportunities to connect young people to nature





Contents

Foreword by Alison Stevens	4
Generation Green in numbers	6
Making the vision a reality	8
The power of collaboration	12
Six powerful outcomes	16
1 Widening access to and engagement with the outdoors	19
2 Developing a more aspirant green sector workforce	27
3 Engaging young people with the outdoors and connecting them to nature	35
4 Improving young people's wellbeing	43
5 Building the resilience of the coalition	51
6 Boosting local economies	59
Continuing the journey	66

Foreword

Generation Green is a story of collaboration; a collaboration of a not-for-profit coalition – Access Unlimited – which has made the vision of introducing new voices to England’s national landscapes a reality.

Generation Green represents 15 partner organisations all pulling in the same direction for a common goal - to connect young people to nature – many for the first time, and to cultivate a sense of care for the natural environment.

Large scale collaboration within the third sector is often talked about but not always achieved. We have achieved it with Generation Green and proven its power – jobs have been created, people have developed skills, local economies have been supported, delivery partners are more resilient, and the mental and physical health of young people has been improved.

Generation Green has delivered more than 115,000 positive life-impacting opportunities, inspiring young people to connect and care for nature. For many this was a new experience. For others, it built on their previous interests and connected them to new opportunities often with organisations that they hadn’t engaged with before.

This 16-month ground-breaking project has all been delivered against the backdrop of a pandemic and accompanying restrictions to the outdoors. Throughout, the Generation Green partners have gone above and beyond, finding new, successful ways of working to achieve our combined goal of making the project happen and get young people out into nature.

I am immensely proud, and also filled with hope, at what we could achieve together with additional funding and without the constraints of a pandemic.

Thank you to everyone involved. You have made a real and measurable impact.

The results, stories and evidence in this report speak for themselves. Generation Green has written its own case for why funding for projects such as this should continue. The opportunities delivered by Generation Green have had real impact – impact on children and young people; impact on nature and the environment, and impact on all the organisations involved.

The voices you hear in this celebration of Generation Green, are those of the people involved with this ground-breaking project – the Access Unlimited coalition partners, volunteers, apprentices, charities, groups, teachers and thousands of young people who have been connected to nature by the myriad of opportunities delivered across England.

This is their story and one we want to continue.



Alison Stevens
Generation Green
Programme Director



**Generation Green
has delivered
more than
115,000 positive
life-impacting
opportunities**

Generation Green in numbers

The very real outcomes of Generation Green are the achievement of 15 not-for-profit organisations working under the umbrella of Access Unlimited.

This is the Generation Green story in numbers...

39,476

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



More than
115,000
opportunities
were delivered to
enable young people
to connect to nature



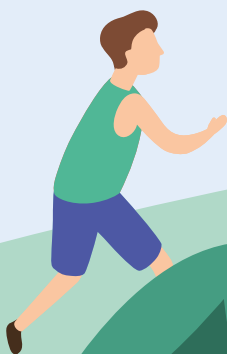
Generation Green and National Parks digital learning resources increased the reach of opportunities delivered to nearly

75,000



33%

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



767

professional or skilled volunteer outdoor leaders were trained



91%

of the young people reached through Generation Green said that they felt more connected to nature



33

individuals were employed and trained through jobs or apprenticeships with 8 people securing employment with Access Unlimited partners



86%

felt more confident being outdoors

54%

said that because of Generation Green they felt more confident in themselves

Making the vision to connect young people to nature a reality



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.

Year 10 pupil, Joseph Leckie Academy

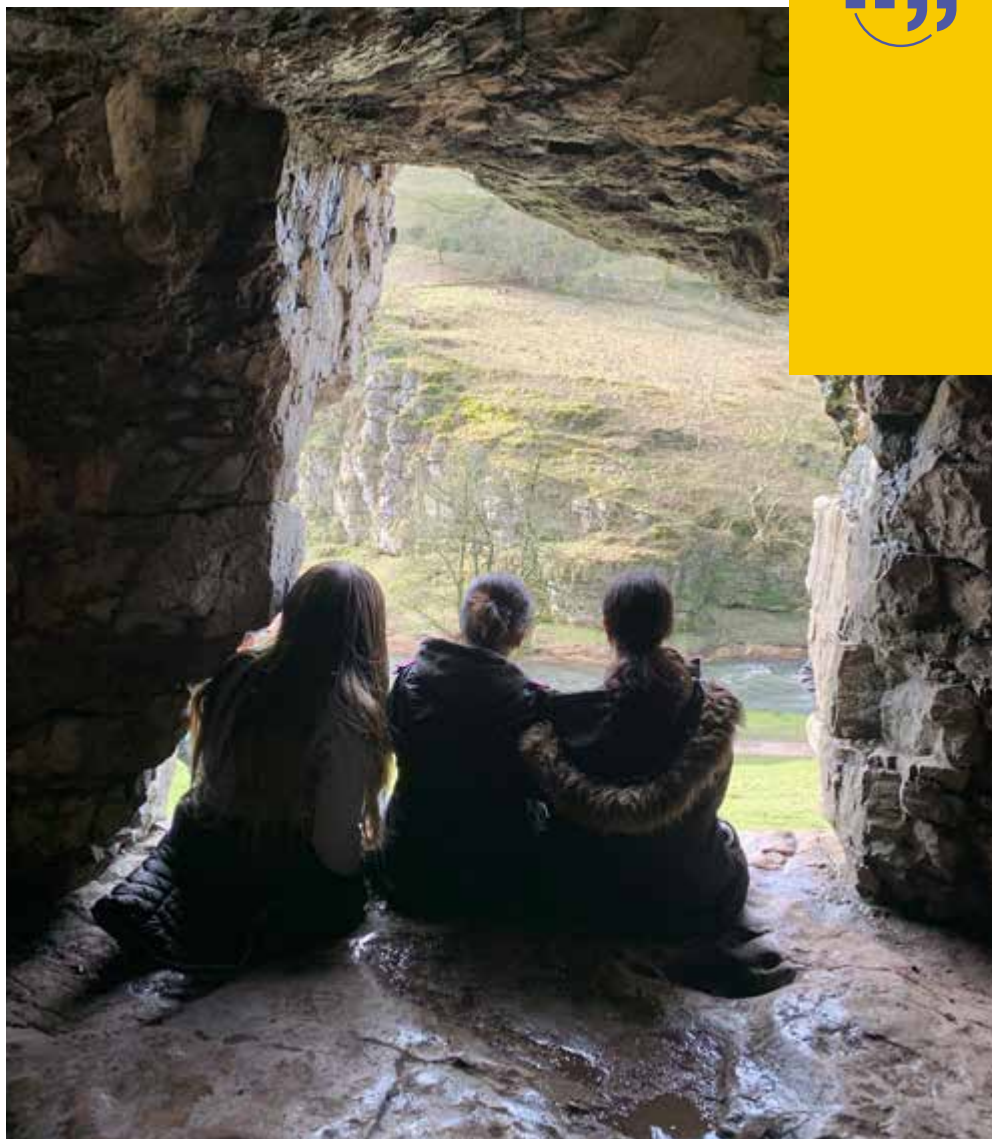


Just 24 hours earlier the same student, who was taking part in a Generation Green-funded residential, had admitted that they didn't know the countryside existed in England.

Natural spaces are important places for connection for young people – with the natural world and each other.

Connection to nature has been proven to benefit wellbeing and happiness in children. Without direct experiences in nature, research suggests that children are missing opportunities to enhance their health and wellbeing, and to develop responsible long-term environmental behaviour.

The positive effects of exposure to nature include increased concentration, greater attention capacities, higher academic performance, better motor coordination, reduced stress levels, increased social interaction with adults and other children, and improved social skills.



Access for all, especially young people, has shown us that change can only be achieved through collaboration.

James Blake, Chief Executive, YHA (England & Wales)

Inequality of access

Despite the many documented benefits, 5% (253,000) of children in England, nearly half (106,000) of which are in London, do not have access to any outdoor space at all, this includes a private garden, balcony and/or a shared, communal plot from their home.

In England, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children are also four times as likely to have no access to outdoor space compared to those from white backgrounds.

For some young people, a school residential trip is often their first experience in nature.

Additionally, our national landscapes are underused, particularly by young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and those living in areas of deprivation.

A collective effort to effect change

Recognising that a collective effort is necessary to effect long-term change, YHA (England & Wales) pledged in its 10-year strategy, launched in 2020, to reach 2.5 million children and young people over the next five years and connect them to nature, culture and heritage.

This pledge was the catalyst for the formation of the Access Unlimited coalition by YHA.

In December 2019, YHA (England & Wales), The Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the 10 National Parks in England came together as a coalition of not-for-profit school residential and outdoor education providers.

With a collective reach of two million young people, combined with different areas of expertise, the aim of the Access Unlimited coalition is simple – to ensure that there are opportunities for every child and young person to access high quality learning and residential experiences in our National Parks and AONBs.



When YHA developed its 10-year strategy we realised that we alone could not deliver it; it relied on collaboration. Out of this came the Access Unlimited coalition. We shared common goals; to reach more young people, to address the issues identified by Glover and support Defra's 25-year Environment Plan. Thanks to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund we have been able to make headway on our collective vision and ambitious plan to ensure every child has a night under the stars in a national landscape a reality. This is the beginning, not the end.

Anita Kerwin-Nye, YHA (England & Wales) Executive Director, Access Unlimited Founder and Generation Green Sponsor



'Every child in Britain should spend a night in a national landscape'

We want our national landscapes to work together with big ambitions, so they are happier, healthier, greener, more beautiful and open to everyone.

Landscapes Review 2019

The inequality of access to national landscapes was highlighted in the Landscapes Review, an independent review commissioned by Defra, and which was led by the writer Julian Glover.

Its purpose was to look at whether the protections for National Parks (which cover nearly a quarter of England) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty were still fit for purpose.

Published on 21 September 2019, the review concluded that our national landscapes are underused, particularly by young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and those living in areas of deprivation.

Amongst the many recommendations made by Glover in the review was that 'every child in Britain should spend a night in a national landscape.'

A problem compounded by the pandemic

While not initially conceived as a pandemic project, COVID-19 made the requirement for Generation Green all the more real. It brought into sharp focus the very real and important need for access to green space.

The inequalities of access to the outdoors and green spaces however have only been compounded by the pandemic.

An estimated 1,137,820 children in England (723,300 children in London alone), lived through lockdown without a garden.

The COVID-enforced closure of local parks and private gardens, important ways of accessing green and natural spaces, was felt more acutely by younger children, with over half (56%) of 8-to-11-year-olds saying that this stopped them from spending more time outside.



The parks where I am, there's not really much you can do so I wanted to come to Outward Bound to see nature and fresh air. It was so green. Everywhere I looked you could see mountains and smell the fields. It's a smell you don't have at home.

Tori (14), Generation Green participant

During lockdown, 81% of children spent less time outside with friends. In fact, 60% of young people reported spending less time outdoors during the pandemic, more than double the proportion that had spent more time outside (25%).

One million children also missed out on a school residential during the pandemic.

The pandemic and lockdowns brought into sharp focus what it means to lack access to the outdoors, nature, green space, culture and heritage. For most of us this is temporary. For children and families with challenging lives, lack of access is pervasive and much more permanent.

The beginning of green shoots

Glover's recommendations, the effect of the pandemic on access to the outdoors, together with the collective aim of the Access Unlimited coalition, combined to plant the seed for Generation Green.

Against a backdrop of COVID restrictions, Generation Green has successfully delivered more than 115,000 opportunities to connect young people to nature.



... 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!

Teacher, Joseph Leckie Academy

The power of collaboration



This project has really helped me grow in my confidence and I have developed a new range of transferable project management skills to use in future projects. I've met a fantastic range of people from organisations across England who all share similar values, a network I plan to stay in regular contact with. I have an increased awareness of the barriers young people face and how we can help overcome them. Finally, I enjoyed embracing the challenges that COVID presented during the project and learning how to adapt through a supportive network across the Generation Green partners.

Dylan Byrne, Youth Engagement Officer/Project Manager for Generation Green, Fields Studies Council



A joint bid securing £2.5 million from The Green Recovery Challenge Fund in 2020, delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency, meant Access Unlimited's vision for Generation Green was one step closer to becoming a reality.

Launched on 28 April 2021, Generation Green established the foundations for supporting young people from a more diverse range of backgrounds to gain access to experiences and routes to employment in the natural environment—through residential, outdoor learning, new jobs, training, and volunteering.

Fast forward 16 months and the reality is that Generation Green has exceeded all expectations: it has created jobs, opportunities, developed skills and improved the wellbeing of thousands of young people, and all against the backdrop of a pandemic.

Using the collective two million+ reach of the Access Unlimited partners, together with partnerships with organisations, small charities, education providers, community groups and individuals, has been fundamental to the success of Generation Green. This multi-layered approach enabled the project to reach more than 115,000 young people in just 16 months and create a legacy that goes far beyond Generation Green.



Some of the kids went out to have a little paddle in the sea at the end of the afternoon... just very remarkably close a seal popped up, out of the sea, its little head, looking at us all... I certainly hadn't, and I don't think anyone else would have, seen a seal in the wild like that... one of those moments you think wow... takes you by surprise.

Alex Clifford, Teacher, Churchill Community College

Generation Green has also opened pathways to employment in the outdoor sector, addressing the lack of diversity in the UK's environment workforce and creating lasting change. BAME groups, young people from Levelling Up areas and other marginalised groups have been given the opportunity to enjoy nature but also shape the way that others see it.

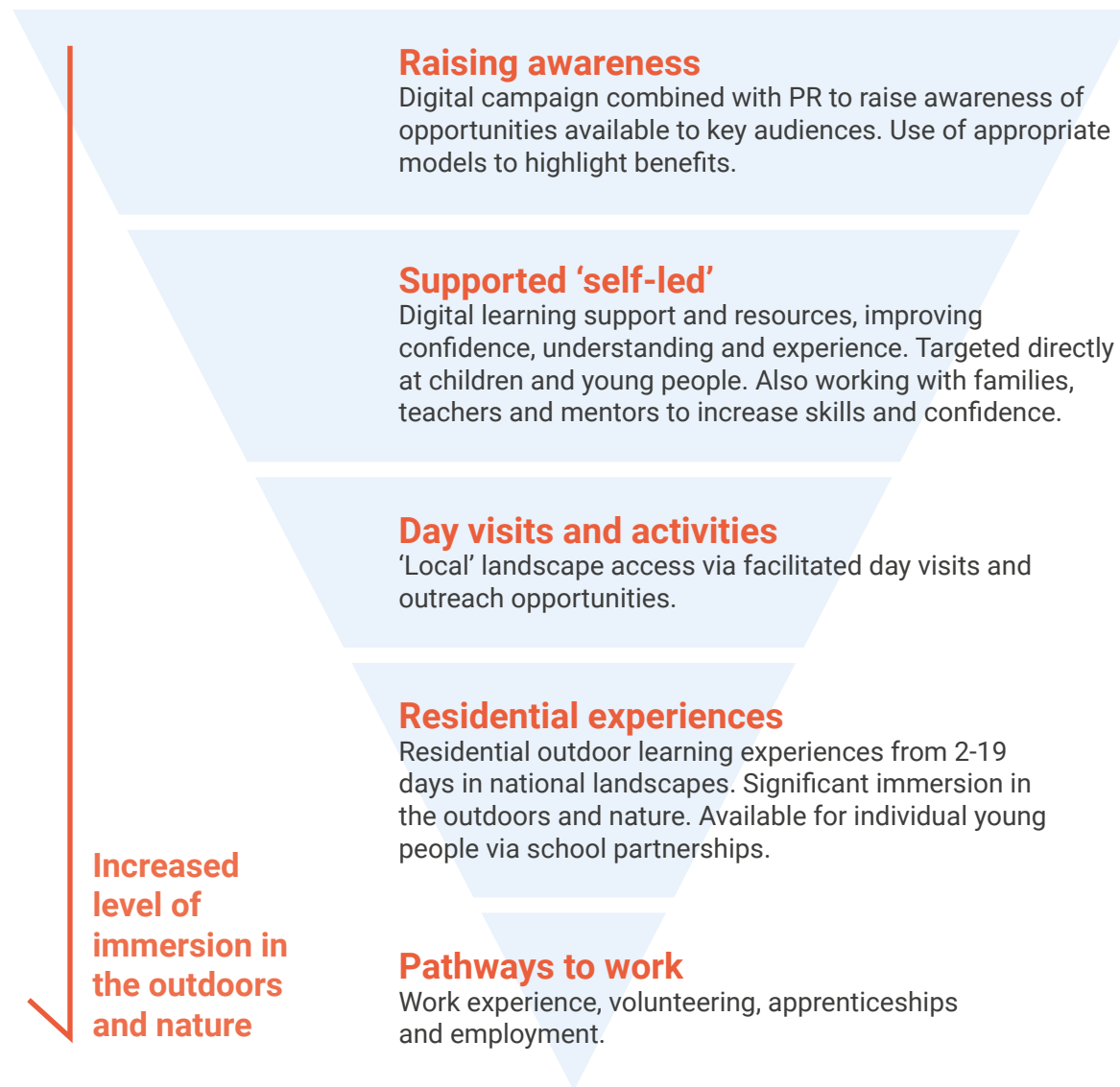
Generation Green is the first project to be delivered by Access Unlimited. Just think what could be achieved through the collective power of the Access Unlimited coalition with further funding.



They went on a walk and, to me that sounds like such a normal everyday activity, but the length of the walk and the animals that they saw on that walk was something that so many children commented on.

Staff Member, Joseph Locke Primary School

Generation Green – how it works



The children got so much out of it. They had a fantastic day. They really did get to connect to nature because it's something that not a lot of them get to do. They loved getting to have a look at the lake and skim rocks on the lake. They loved collecting all of the materials outside.

Teacher, Waterloo Primary School



The name ‘Generation Green’ says it all – we’re building a legacy of engagement to benefit those who would otherwise not have the opportunity to enjoy, respect and conserve nature.

Cressida Allwood, Generation Green Project Manager, YHA (England & Wales)





6 powerful outcomes

Highlighted by both Defra and the Treasury as an example of excellence in access and value for money, Generation Green is a model of new civil society collaboration.

Bringing together five leading youth and educational charities and the National Parks, our combined reach exceeded two million young people. Collaboration enabled us to achieve our objectives on an unprecedented scale and deliver six powerful outcomes:

- 1 Widening access to and engagement with the outdoors**
- 2 Developing a more aspirant green sector workforce**
- 3 Engaging young people with the outdoors and connecting them with nature**
- 4 Improving young people's wellbeing**
- 5 Building the resilience of the coalition**
- 6 Boosting local economies**

Nature Connectedness

Building on research by the Nature Connectedness Research Group at the University of Derby, Generation Green activities delivered by Access Unlimited partners responded to five nature connectedness pathways identified by the group.

The nature connectedness pathways provided a route for people to develop a new relationship with the natural world.

Through Generation Green we have inspired future custodians of our natural environment.



Contact Emotion Beauty Meaning Compassion

...we've found that, rather than time and visits to nature, a close relationship matters just as much and, at times, even more for feeling good and functioning well - being resilient to the challenges life can bring. This close relationship isn't dependent on taking a trip into nature. It can be made at, or very close to, home.

Miles Richardson, Professor of Human Factors and Nature Connectedness at the University of Derby¹

¹<https://www.derby.ac.uk/blog/coronavirus-nature-mental-wellbeing/>

Outcome

1

Widening access to and engagement with the outdoors



We know a significant proportion of children, almost 20 per cent, living in the most deprived areas of England never visit the natural environment at all - and this must change. As the nation's breathing spaces and with some of our most stunning and varied countryside, National Parks offer the perfect opportunity for young people to learn outside. Whether it be a school trip to a National Park or a volunteering day surveying wildlife, it's these kinds of experiences that can inspire a lifetime of caring for the environment.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park and who leads the education portfolio for UK National Parks

Equality and diversity were at the heart of Generation Green.

The Landscapes Review identified that ‘National Parks are an exclusive, mainly white, mainly middle class club, with rules only members understand and much too little done to encourage first time visitors.’

Young people from areas of deprivation and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups who may have never experienced nature, were prioritised as part of the project. For many, it was an opportunity to experience being in a national landscape for the first time.

Generation Green provided the spark for new groups of young people to access national landscapes through thousands of opportunities, from light touch micro volunteering and residential and day trips, to employment and training opportunities.

There’s still a lot of work to do. But, through Generation Green, we are now hearing new voices in England’s national landscapes.

Reaching young people who benefit the most

Ahead of commencing its funded residential and day stay programme, YHA ensured it reached young people who would benefit the most.

Through a direct marketing campaign, YHA targeted schools that were new to the charity, were located in deprived areas of the country and had a higher than average proportion of Pupil Premium funding, free school meals and where there was

known to be a higher proportion of BAME students. The strategy proved successful.

Independent research commissioned by YHA part way through delivery of the project, found that its Generation Green-funded residential and day visits were being accessed by BAME students as well as those from disadvantaged communities.

Researchers from insights consultancy Know Research attended a number of Caring for Nature and Connecting to Nature residential and day visits run by YHA and conducted interviews with staff from six schools.

They found that four of the schools had significant 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 with 20.8% nationally.



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.

Phil McNeill Trust Enrichment Lead at Bluecoat Academy



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.

Tara, Women's Outdoor Leadership Course participant

Addressing gender imbalance

The Outward Bound Trust's first ever Women's Outdoor Leadership Course received three times as many applicants as places.

Designed to support women into the sector as highly skilled outdoor instructors, eight women, aged 21 to 33, completed the 10-week training and development course which focused on developing their technical, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills.





'...not everyone is able to access this'

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



I really enjoyed getting in the river and breathing fresh air. I would highly recommend this to other students, because I think it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and not everyone is able to access this. So, if you have the opportunity, you should definitely do it.

Adefemi, student

‘The most rewarding set of sessions’

The opportunities in Scouts’ Adventure for All programme were offered to young people aged 7 to 18, from communities 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.



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.

Scouts Green Champion volunteer



Charitable partnerships to widen reach

With a staggering one in three children living in poverty in Manchester, 10 Generation Green-funded places on The Outward Bound Trust's Summer Adventure programme were allocated via the young person's charity Young Manchester.

Getting young people outdoors and spending time in nature was a priority for Young Manchester following another inner city lockdown, a second round of school closures and prolonged isolation from friends.

Young people took part in a week-long funded residential at The Outward Bound Trust's centre in Aberdovey, where they rebuilt their confidence, developed self-esteem and resilience.



Organisations like Young Manchester are working day in, day out with the young people who can benefit from our services the most. Our ongoing partnership means we can identify and signpost vital opportunities like these to young people who might not otherwise be looking for an Outward Bound adventure.

Oliver Blomfield, Head of Summer Adventures,
The Outward Bound Trust





Students obviously come from an urban area. These are not the sort of kids whose parents are members of the National Trust who are going on day trips and holidays out to the countryside.

Alex Clifford, Teacher, Churchill Community College



The reference point for many of the learners is Toxteth Park, but that is walled, it's gated. That is their perception of the countryside: that you can only go in and out at certain times. The visit to YHA Langdale helped them to properly understand National Parks and the countryside.

Phil Leybourne, Geography Teacher, West Derby School



Rehna Yaseen,
a mentor on
Outward Bound
Trust's Outdoor
Leadership course



Being a course mentor is a privilege. Mentoring young people from different ethnic groups receiving opportunities through the Generation Green funding that they possibly wouldn't have otherwise, is life changing.



Outcome

2

Developing a more aspirant green sector workforce



Connecting young people with nature is part of our DNA at Scouts. We believe our green spaces are the world's greatest classrooms, where young people can learn to take risks, build resilience and gain vital skills for life. This matters more now than ever, after so many months of lockdowns, restrictions and disruptions to schooling.

Matt Hyde OBE, Chief Executive, Scouts

The environment workforce is recognised as one of the least diverse in England.

Generation Green laid the foundations on which to build an aspirant, more diverse workforce for a sustainable and long-term green recovery.

Together the Access Unlimited partners have delivered more than a hundred thousand opportunities for young people to feel more confident with nature and to access it through new jobs, training, volunteering roles, day and residential visits, and online learning experiences.

Generation Green has been successful in developing a new pathway of roles across the Access Unlimited coalition; creating employment and volunteering opportunities from entry level to senior staff around connections to nature, many of which are for those aged under 26.

The project has made a real difference to the longer term aim to diversify the workforce of the wider outdoor sector, so that we can build towards a more inclusive and representative future.

Kickstarting careers in the green sector

YHA's Generation Green-funded Kickstart placements prompted young people to think about how they can apply their new-found and existing skills in the green sector.

Photography graduate Ed Owen (24) was one of a number of young people who undertook a six-month Kickstart placement with YHA Swanage. Since graduating in 2018 Ed had done temporary supermarket work. The Kickstart placement encouraged him to re-think how he could apply his photography degree within the green sector.

Following the completion of his Kickstart placement, Ed successfully applied for a team member position at YHA Swanage for the 2022 season.



Before I started the Kickstart position, I was looking for opportunities and I didn't have a clear direction, but now I feel I have some solid options. Although being at the hostel was not related that much to what my degree was really about, in a weird way it opened my mind to the possibilities that I shouldn't give up on photography.

Ed Owen



I developed my knowledge and understanding of many topics as I have worked on an array of courses such as birds, fungi, nature writing and nature drawing, making myself a much more rounded and flexible training provider. I gained further knowledge and skills, which has allowed me to progress as an experienced and accredited creator of environmental education and training courses in my future career.

Bek Trehern, Engagement and Training Assistant with Field Studies Council

'...I gained further knowledge and skills'

Zoology postgraduate Bek Trehern (26) secured a Generation Green-funded paid internship as an engagement and training assistant with Field Studies Council.

Bek experienced first-hand difficulty in gaining experience in the biodiversity sector because of the limited amount of roles within it. Her role, which supported the roll-out of the Field Studies Council's Eco Skills courses targeted at 18 to 26-year-olds, attracted 250 applications.

As part of her internship, she went on to secure qualifications in project management and education and training. Within the role she also hosted the UK-wide virtual Youth Debate with young environmentalists on behalf of Field Studies Council at the COP26 climate change conference in Glasgow.





Alice Rich



When we presented our volunteering strategy, we said that young people should be the inspiration and catalyst for growing our green economy, and our approach will hopefully support their journey through education and volunteering into employment.

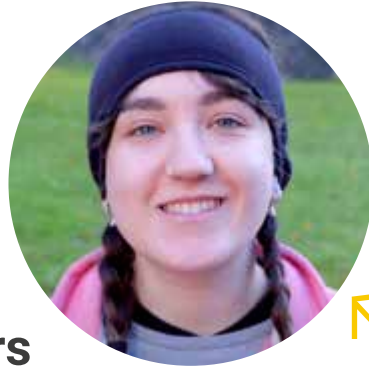
Nick Cotton, member champion for recreation management, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Jobs through volunteering

Yorkshire Dales National Park recruited 12 youth volunteers to its Generation Green funded 'Up Skill, Down Dale' programme. The volunteering programme provided opportunities for young people, aged 14 to 30, who wanted to 'make their mark on the Park' and develop their knowledge and confidence by getting involved in skilled volunteer placements.

Two of the volunteers, Lydia Gill (27) and Alice Rich (22), secured permanent jobs in the green economy as a direct result of the Up Skill, Down Dale volunteering programme.

Lydia joined Dartmoor National Park Authority as a Ranger Apprentice, while Alice secured a role with Leeds City Council's trees team.



Confidence to pursue new careers

Georgina Barrett completed a Generation Green-funded combined Level 3 Leader and Hill and Moorland Leader qualification. She is now considering pursuing a freelance career in outdoor leadership.

The Level 3 qualification has boosted Georgina's confidence and prompted her to apply for positions in Girlguiding she wouldn't have thought herself capable of before.



I wouldn't be doing things like this today if it weren't for Girlguiding. I'm really grateful for all the opportunities that they've provided, not least the funding that they've offered. Generation Green funding turned it from something I wanted to do into something I knew I could actually do.

Georgina Barrett



I love work experience. I love chopping down the trees. I've learnt about sawing. I like being outdoors.

Adam, student,
Pathways College

Partnering to develop skills

New Forest National Park Ranger Apprentices have shared their skills and developed new ones with ranger teams in local partner organisations.

Two apprentices, whose apprenticeships were funded by Generation Green, spent time with Forestry England, National Trust, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and RSPB.

Through a placement with local partners, the apprentices gained experience in a variety of ranger work, from public engagement and event delivery to site maintenance and practical habitat management.



The New Forest Ranger Apprenticeship was a great opportunity and route into the organisation to understand who we are and what we do, as well as develop key employment skills. There's a real opportunity for apprentices to experience both practical management of the nation's forests and engage with the people who use them and be able to leave a small impact and feel a sense of achievement, whether this was maintaining a walking trail for people to enjoy for years to come or educating a visitor to act responsibly on their next visit.

Gary North, New Forest Recreation Manager,
Forestry England





The best bit was learning about the environment and green careers.

Student, Churchill Community College

Broadening career horizons

YHA's Caring for Nature Generation Green-funded residentials and day stays were designed to introduce school children to practical and conservation work to help protect the natural world.

Twenty-six Year 10 pupils from Churchill Community College attended a Caring for Nature residential at YHA Boggle Hole. 100% of the young people said that they had learned about jobs and volunteering opportunities in nature, helping to broaden their career horizons.



I absolutely 100% think it has opened up opportunities for me. I've already started applying for environmental jobs, and I'm being asked questions like 'how would you encourage other people to think about the environment?' and I can say, I've done that! I've been able to educate people on plastics and waste. It's definitely opened doors, it's already a step forward because I've had this experience and this training.

Niamh, Scouts Volunteer

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, wearing dark, heavy rain jackets with hoods. They are both looking downwards with slight smiles. The woman's jacket has a logo that says "Lake District National Park". The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a field or park, with hills in the distance. A yellow line graphic circles the quote text.

“”

It's satisfying doing the work. You're moving the earth and starting to understand what our earth needs. And especially in careers in the environmental sector, you start to understand what our earth really needs at this point.

Matthew, Young Ranger



We want to create a world where everyone feels connected to the environment so they can enjoy the benefits it gives and make choices that help protect it.

Mark Barrett, CEO, Field Studies Council



Outcome

3

Engaging young people with the outdoors and connecting them with nature



Generation Green responded directly to Glover's plea to 'reignite the fire and vision which brought England's national landscapes into being in 1949.'

However, connecting to nature goes beyond just being outdoors.



These bug dens are going to be here hopefully in 10, 20 years' time and what we've done today, there is a legacy.

Year 8 pupil, West Derby School

Research by University of Derby's Nature Connectedness Group shows it's about how you engage with nature while you're there. What you do is more important than how long you spend doing it.

Our activities provided thousands of opportunities for young people to connect with nature, learn about the natural environment, its importance and their impact on it.

Funded activities focused on environmental learning, including teaching about eco-friendly behaviours, flora and fauna, the importance of spending time outside, how to lessen our impact on the natural environment, inspiring others to enjoy the outdoors safely as well as information on careers in the outdoors industry.



'Its little head, looking at us all...'

A Generation Green-funded Caring for Nature residential experience at YHA Boggle Hole left a big impression on Year 10 students from an inner-city area in the North East of England - 91% of them said they felt 'more connected to nature'.

During their stay the students used the Field Studies Council's wildlife ID guides to identify nature on the rocky foreshore bordering the youth hostel. Braver members of the group even had a paddle in the sea where they were greeted by a friendly seal.



It's almost like escaping where you are. I went to the outdoors, to nature and I didn't have anything to worry about. I was just in nature, with my friends, in a group doing activities and any worries or stress I had before weren't really there. It's like being free.

The Outward Bound Trust's BAME Young Leaders programme participant





Encouragement to stop and learn

Field Studies Council's free Generation Green-funded wildlife ID guides, targeted at 16 to 25-year-olds, were distributed to 5,000 young people. The colourful, water-resistant guides were designed to give young people a richer experience in the outdoors. They were a hit.

A survey by Field Studies Council found that recipients' connection with nature increased from 47% to 66% as a result of receiving the guides.

More than half (54%) of recipients said they would be very likely to volunteer to protect or care for the natural environment, up from 38% prior to receiving the guides. And just over a third (35%) have since gone on to buy more nature guides or take a course to develop their knowledge of the natural world further.



The guides themselves are easy to use and well designed to get started in various topics and do encourage us to stop and learn a little.

Guide recipient



It's really inspiring to see how the New Forest National Park and its unique environment have played a part in empowering young people to make a difference for nature where they live.

Claire Pearce, Project Officer, New Forest National Park



The course definitely highlighted and proved the positives of nature connectedness. I've learnt that connecting with nature is not just about the environment you're in, but the way you interact with that environment.

Bethan Meredith, Generation Green Apprentice, YHA (England & Wales)

Empowering young people to make a difference

The New Forest National Park's Generation Green-funded Wild Spaces project helped young people in urban areas to connect with nature and look after the green spaces where they live.

One of the groups, Calshot Youth Club in Hampshire, was inspired by the project to transform their local green space with bird boxes and feeders, planting fruit trees, and incorporating natural play features.

The project enabled the club to make their vision a reality by providing support to design their space and to apply for funds, as well as to develop the key skills they needed to transform the space themselves.

Developing deeper connections to nature across the coalition

Across the Access Unlimited coalition, partners continued to learn and enhance their skills through Generation Green's relationship with the Nature Connectedness Research Group (NCRG).

During the project, Access Unlimited partners were given free access to University of Derby's online 20-hour CPD Connecting to Nature course.





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.

Volunteer, 2nd Ryde Brownies

‘...they felt closer to nature’

An activity pack helped ensure no-one was left out when it came to Girlguiding’s range of Generation Green-funded day and residential events.

Those unable to attend the events used the activity packs to run themed activities, extending the benefit of the project to 200 Girlguiding members.



‘They are absolutely thriving’

With pupil engagement in schools a challenge during COVID, the Generation Green-funded Green Leaders programme, which was delivered by the National Parks, helped re-engage a number of disengaged Year 10 students from York High School.

The fully-funded six-week Green Leaders programme in the North York Moors National Park, supported young people to become leading voices and active participants in the green economy and conservation.

Students learnt new skills, helping them re-engage with their learning. Activities included building nature-friendly screens, bracken bashing, tree guard removal and clay lining a new wildlife pond.

Through the programme the young people developed employability skills, punctuality and respect for each other – all attributes which transferred to the classroom.



The feedback they give me each week is incredible. They are absolutely thriving!

Teacher, York High School





A lot of young people tend to move away from the National Park, which is a shame, and it's important to show that you can still live and work in the National Park. The change in the way people are working, with more home working, is a great opportunity for the National Park.

Joe Hudson, Up Skill, Down Dale volunteer



On the trip was a boy whose jaw dropped as we were driving along Lake Windermere. His face was awe inspired; the fact he had seen something he had never seen before.

Phil Leybourne, Geography Teacher,
West Derby School



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.

Green Champion volunteer



At a time when young people are facing many challenges, enabling adventures outdoors is vital to supporting their wellbeing.

Angela Salt, CEO, Girlguiding



Outcome

4


Improving young people's wellbeing

According to the World Health Organisation, 75% of all mental health problems are established by the time someone is 18, and one in 10 school children have a diagnosable mental health condition.

Connections to nature improve wellbeing. However, during the pandemic millions of young people lived through lockdowns without access to green spaces.

In England, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children are four times as likely to have no access to outdoor space compared with those from white backgrounds.

The startling reality of this fact was brought into focus during the pandemic when 71% of children from ethnic minority backgrounds reported spending less time outside compared with 57% of white children.



The issue was further escalated by the heavy reliance on digital technology through increased time indoors and the delivery of school lessons online.

Being denied the sights, sounds and smells of nature during childhood is associated with an increased risk of mental health problems later in life. Growing up deprived of green space is associated with a higher risk of mental illness (up to 55%).

Generation Green prioritised young BAME people as well as those from England's highest areas of deprivation.

During the pandemic, and against a backdrop of COVID restrictions, the Generation Green activities successfully enabled thousands of young people to connect with nature in the outdoors, supporting both their short and long-term wellbeing as well as reducing anger, stress and anxiety.

‘The experience made me feel very calm’

The power of the outdoors on young people’s mental health was put under the spotlight at a Digital Detox Camp organised by North York Moors National Park.

Young Rangers attended the camp which was designed to address the growing issue of the time young people spend indoors using digital technology.



The detox allowed us to get off our phones and technology and relate with nature and the natural world rather than the digital. My favourite activity was the boat trip as we were able to see sea creatures such as dolphins and seals and also birds, like gannets and seagulls. Overall, the experience made me feel very calm and grew my bond with nature.

Daniel (13), Young Ranger

They took part in activities such as mindfulness walks, seashore safaris, an emotion mapping walk and exploring a woodland in the dark. The activities enabled the Young Rangers to truly see nature and immerse themselves within it using their senses to connect, offering a restorative effect for mental health and wellbeing.

Building self-confidence and resilience

Parents of young people taking part in Generation Green activities also benefitted from the project indirectly.

Through Generation Green funding, students from Pathways College – a complex needs sixth form – worked with The Broads National Park to build awareness of their local environment, their self-confidence and communication skills.

Along with practical skills, the students were also exposed to softer skills such as teamwork, problem solving and resilience. A two-night residential stay provided students with the opportunity to explore The Broads by canoe, enjoy a meal cooked on an open fire, explore star-filled dark skies, and spot seals playing in the surf down on the beach.



He always talks about it when he gets home. We really appreciate that he's had this opportunity to be outdoors after being stuck inside for so long, and that he has picked up new skills too.

Parent of a Pathways College student

The power of outdoor education

The Outward Bound Trust was the first coalition partner to begin delivery of its Generation Green-funded programmes in Easter 2021.

Fifty young people aged 11 to 17, and in receipt of free school meals, participated in the first Outward Bound Trust Adventure Day early in the Generation Green project. Their places were fully-funded and took place at The Outward Bound Trust's centres at Eskdale and Ullswater in the Lake District.



It was really important to us to show early in the Generation Green project just how beneficial outdoor activities are for young people, particularly in the wake of the pandemic which has had a disproportionately negative effect on young people's resilience, self-confidence and positivity. We were keen to show to all stakeholders the powerful and positive effects outdoor education can have when young people step outside of their comfort zone.

Ailie Shackleton, Head of Communications,
The Outward Bound Trust



This is a dream come true. To walk up a hill like this, a dream come true.

Pupil, Nightingale Primary School



I have the wonderful job of starting the programme and welcoming all the young people to the session, and getting them excited for what they are about to take part in. I've already seen many benefits to the young people who get involved. It's great to see them get so involved in the activities and share information about their experience with 'Being Green'.

Emily Brown (22), Green Volunteer, Scouts



Inspiring joy, calm, wonder and awe

Four thousand Green Champions were created as part of the Generation Green project.

Scouts' Green Volunteers, recruited as part of Generation Green, delivered the five-step day programmes to would-be Green Champions from Scout and school groups, equipping young people with the skills needed to make a positive impact in their community.

During the programme, young people were encouraged to discuss how they felt about going outside. Did they feel joy, calm, wonder or awe? Did it affect their energy levels?



'...memories like these last a lifetime'

The Peak District National Park's Green Pathways programme reached youngsters beyond the National Park boundary to provide motivation, experiences, skills, training and career development opportunities.

Day visits and residential stays were delivered to school groups, Junior Rangers and young people interested in green career skills. Sessions were based at local YHA youth hostels, providing space for outdoor activities in the grounds and easy access to the countryside for walks and practical conservation.



We encouraged participants to use their senses in experiencing the place, from making a sound map to walking mindfully. From the feedback, the most memorable moments were experiencing dark skies and relaxing outside in a hammock – memories like these last a lifetime.

Michelle Pickering, Assistant Ranger, Peak District National Park

Outdoor adventures in urban environments

With COVID restrictions stopping all residential trips, The Outward Bound Trust's plan was simple - if young people couldn't come to them, then they would go and deliver outdoor adventures in urban school environments.

The Outward Bound Trust's instructors made a significant difference to the wellbeing of young people from urban and inner-city schools in areas such as London, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and Liverpool.



The Outward Bound Trust coming into school didn't just offer something for our children, it offered something for our staff. The children love it, the teachers love it. It's one of the highlights of their week.

Andrew Davies, Head Teacher, Lazonby CE School

They helped them readjust to being back at school, to re-engage with classroom learning and to reconnect with their peers.

2,000 young people from urban and inner-city schools were able to experience an In-School Adventure with The Outward Bound Trust thanks to funding from Generation Green. A number of teachers have since continued the programme independently in their schools.



Outcome

5

Building the resilience of the coalition

COVID-19 forced the closure of the outdoor education sector during its two busiest trading quarters, resulting in lost revenue estimated at £275 million.

Access Unlimited partners were no exception. YHA alone suffered a 64% drop in income. The pandemic was the largest threat to the charity's survival since it was established in 1930.

Facing their biggest challenge ever, the Access Unlimited coalition - through Generation Green - maximised efficiencies and unlocked the potential of 15 not-for-profit outdoor education providers working together against a backdrop of COVID-19.

Generation Green funding was, quite literally, a lifeline to the Access Unlimited partners. It gave them breathing space to develop long-term strategies to not only survive but to thrive.

Across the Access Unlimited coalition, 33 individuals were employed and trained through jobs and apprenticeships. The roles were all funded through Generation Green. Capacity building, as a direct result of Generation Green, has enabled eight people to secure either a permanent or fixed-term contract with coalition partners.

Funding also enabled a new generation of volunteers to be introduced to the coalition partners and national landscapes. In total, 767 professional or skilled volunteer outdoor leaders were trained by coalition members.

This army of new and existing volunteers, together with 59 digital nature connection resources and National Parks Key Stage 2 online learning resources created through Generation Green funding, will continue to support the funded organisations, supporting their long-term green recovery and sustainability.



Generation Green has allowed us to reach out into some of the communities who benefit most from connecting to nature. We've been able to work with over 5,000 young people directly, and through our digital resources inspire tens of thousands of leaders and teachers to build nature into their programmes. This has been a new and exciting way for us to deliver adventures and we're looking forward to building on the experience we've gained to benefit thousands more young people in the future.

Dan Woodhouse, Generation Green Project Manager, Scouts



'No-one is as smart as all of us'

The country's first National Park Youth Cabinet, which gives young and local people an active role in their National Park, had the opportunity to come together for the first time at the Generation Green-funded Youth Voice Residential, held at YHA Edale.

National Parks are well placed to give young people a voice on a local, national and international stage.

Thirty-one young people, aged 15 to 26, took up the call from all 10 National Parks in England to become the next generation of leaders helping to shape, conserve, and enhance our National Parks and protected spaces.

With a purpose of 'Connecting UK National Parks' young adults in the collective pursuit of a more diverse voice to address pressing environmental and social challenges,' the National Park Youth Voice will, one day, take up the reins as we navigate the challenges of the climate emergency.



Inspiring the next generation

Ensuring that the Access Unlimited partners maximised their reach amongst young people, during Generation Green and beyond, YHA recruited a youth team.

YHA (England & Wales) recruited a 14-strong volunteer Youth Advisory Team (YAT) of young people aged under 26. Several members of the team contributed to the design of Generation Green-funded activity delivered by YHA.

Like the National Park Youth Voice, YAT is a permanent team which collaborates with YHA's trustees and staff to ensure that young people are included in YHA's governance and in all aspects of the charity's decision making.



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.

Louise Thompson, YAT member



Reaching new schools

YHA's Generation Green-funded day stays and residential enabled the youth charity to target new schools successfully. All 1,800 funded places went to schools new to YHA, with 89% of the young people recorded as coming from areas of high deprivation.

Demand for the funded stays outstripped places by 400%. For those schools that YHA was unable to offer funded stays to, they were referred on to Generation Green partners and the funded opportunities they offered.



The youth hostel is fab, the meals were great, the rooms were really good. All the facilities were really, really good. I would definitely advise anybody to go.

Susan McBeth, Head Teacher, Jarrow Cross CE Primary

Developing the confidence, knowledge and skills of teachers

National Parks utilised Generation Green funding to create learning resources which introduced teachers to the wider learning opportunities afforded by local and National Park landscapes.

In conjunction with educational consultant David Weatherly, the UK's National Parks Education Teams developed the free-to-download 'Teaching Resource Exploring the UK's National Parks'.

The resource provides teachers with the background knowledge, materials and learning and teaching ideas to enable pupils to understand the importance of National Parks in their lives now and in the future.

Using these resources, South Downs National Park delivered online training to 531 teaching staff, introducing them to the special qualities of the wider learning opportunities afforded by the local and National Park landscape.



I found all of the information really useful. The resources to be able to use in the classroom. Getting something solid to refer back to and use at a later date when I've forgotten the finer points of the talk. I can see this being used to boost my confidence. So much knowledge and so many ideas.

Teacher



I definitely think wherever I end up in the country I would like to keep some involvement, once a week, that kind of thing.

Sam, Green Volunteer, Scouts

Recruiting future green leaders

Scouts volunteers worked with 4,000 young people to deliver its Generation Green-funded Green Champion programme.

Being a team leader for Green Champions combined instructing with leadership, and also elements of administration and management. The programme was an opportunity to attract new volunteers to Scouts and also retain existing volunteers, like Sam.

Sam had been involved with Scouts since he was six years old and has been volunteering since he was 18 and was attracted to the opportunity as something different. He plans to continue volunteering for Scouts.

‘We were able to inspire young people to take action’

Cross-department innovation and skills development, funded by Generation Green, enabled Field Studies Council to connect more than 10,000 young people to nature, two thirds (66%) of which were new to the organisation.

The wider engagement with young people directly contributed to an increase in the number of young people booking onto Field Studies Council’s online courses.

Tutors across eight centres introduced immersive nature activities into their fieldwork days; the marketing team successfully targeted niche audiences to encourage young people to connect with the outdoors, and the publications team sent thousands of free wildlife ID guides to young people across England.



The budget received as part of the Generation Green project helped us reach and grow a customer base of future environmentalists, which will benefit us now and in the future.

Roisin McAteer, Marketing Team Leader,
Field Studies Council





We've worked hard to create a space where women 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.

Kate O'Brien, Project Manager, Women's Outdoor Leadership Course





Outcome

6

Boosting the local economy

The financial impact of the pandemic has added further strain to rural economies that were already under pressure.

With outdoor settings unable to re-open until 12 April 2021, the commercial partnerships developed in the wider communities through Generation Green have enabled the survival and re-establishment of many community groups, projects and outdoor education providers.



The funding was transformational, not only in introducing thousands of young people to all that the outdoors has to offer, but in opening pathways to employment in the outdoor sector for disadvantaged and marginalised groups across the UK.

Nick Barrett, Chief Executive, The Outward Bound Trust

Scouts, Girlguiding and youth hostels are embedded in their local communities. All partners have local networks of schools, colleges and community groups which supported recruitment and engagement at all levels of Generation Green.

Working with other not-for-profit, public sector and commercial providers, who all play a critical part in our rural economies, has enabled Generation Green to support the wider green recovery.

Collectively, the Access Unlimited coalition has also delivered against the goals of the UK government's 25 Year Environment Plan, while helping to sustain and build capacity in the sector.



It's incredibly exciting to get South Downs Youth Action up and running again as we had to cancel last year's programme due to the pandemic.

Daniel Greenwood, Volunteering Development Officer,
South Downs National Park



Re-establishing rural groups

A partnership with South Downs Volunteering Network made it possible for South Downs National Park to get South Downs Youth Action up and running again in 2021.

South Downs Volunteering Network works as a collaborative 'hub' in partnership with local organisations and charities to support their interests and protect the environment of the South Downs National Park.

Generation Green funded a series of one-day events and residential experiences for 16 to 25-year-olds who wanted to make a difference to the environment. Opportunities available to participants included photographing wildlife, species surveying, clearing plastic from beaches, and rural skills and crafts.

Supporting community initiatives

A partnership project between Generation Green and Dartmoor National Park saw nearly 500 tree whips planted by young volunteers during National Tree Week.

Sixth form students from Mill Ford School, students from City College Plymouth, young people from the Momentum Project at Tavistock Youth Café, and young adults from Dame Hannahs planted a total of 465 tree whips at sites throughout Ivybridge.

The Generation Green-funded tree planting project formed part of a wider initiative in Ivybridge that will see a total of more than 2,500 trees planted this winter.



Despite some very wet weather, everyone absolutely loved having the opportunity to plant some trees which will benefit future generations, and which they can easily re-visit and watch grow.

Emily Cannon, Youth Engagement Ranger, Dartmoor National Park



Working with local delivery partners

Staff at an innovative outdoor activity provider based in the heart of the Sussex countryside, benefitted from a partnership with South Downs National Park.

So Sussex was instrumental in delivering Generation Green-funded activity to more than 400 pupils in the National Park and at YHA South Downs.

Activities included nature day visits and residential experiences with YHA South Downs through So Sussex's Schools Without Walls programme, which champions high quality learning outside of the classroom for all young people.

Staff at So Sussex were also able to access additional training and resources provided by Generation Green funding.

Local jobs for local people

Ensuring that young people gained the opportunity and skills they need to build long-term sustainable careers in the sector, seven apprenticeships were created through Generation Green funding.

Five apprentices joined YHA, and two apprentice rangers joined New Forest National Park.

YHA also recruited 12 Generation Green-funded Kickstart placements across the youth hostel network.

YHA's Generation Green-funded Kickstart placements prompted young people to think about how they can apply their new-found and existing skills in the green sector.

As a result of the relationship developed with the Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus as part of Kickstart, YHA filled more than 300 vacancies across its network through the government's new Way to Work programme.

Rory Baxter,
YHA Apprentice



We were excited to go live with our advertisement for five apprenticeship opportunities with YHA supporting the Generation Green project. Amazingly, four were offered and accepted within a month!

Dawn Holden, Recruitment and Training Manager, YHA (England & Wales)





I'm hefted here. This is where I'm from, so it's about understanding myself as well as understanding the landscape.

Laura Day

Laura Day met with Rishi Sunak when he visited YHA Grinton Lodge to learn about the Generation Green project in his constituency.



'I'm hefted here'

Laura Day (25), a resident on a tenanted farm within the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP), was one of 10 skilled youth volunteers recruited as Green Leaders in the National Park.

Green Leaders is a training and engagement programme which supports young people as leading voices and active participants in the green economy.

As part of her Green Leader role, Laura sits on the YDNPA Management Plan Steering Group and has a say in the National Park's future.

Enabling a night under the stars

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

During 2021 more than 3,400 young people enjoyed a night under the stars.

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.

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.



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.

Sarah Clarkson, Chair of the Elton Committee, Elton Campsite





What's important for me is that young people help to decide the direction that we are taking, because it's them that are going to be taking over in future.

Neil Heseltine, Farmer and Chair of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



The economy is really important and that has got to link in with climate change. Generation Green is doing that by giving skills to young people that will support a route to employment in the green economy.

Julie Hutton, Deputy Chair, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Continuing the journey



...the government is proud to support more diverse and inclusive engagement, such as the Generation Green programme.

Landscapes Review (National Parks and AONBs):
Government Response



Looking to the future

The outcomes of Generation Green have contributed to laying the foundations for the large-scale, long-term change laid out in Defra's response to the Landscapes Review.

Recognising the contribution Generation Green has made, the response highlighted the project as an example of how national-scale partnerships and coordinated collaboration can increase engagement with all parts of society.

Published on 15 January 2022, the response laid out plans by the Environment Secretary George Eustice, to:

- encourage improved access to our protected landscapes and nature for all parts of society, particularly where this supports improved public health and wellbeing;
- continue support for the local communities that live and work in protected landscapes, helping preserve our heritage for future generations;
- drive nature recovery and nature-based solutions within protected landscapes to help address the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change; and
- apply structural changes and resources to support our protected landscapes in delivering more for nature, climate, people and places.

Sixteen months of both quantitative and qualitative data has proven that Generation Green has established a foothold in the 21st century journey to helping the nation's most cherished landscapes fulfil their original mission for people - providing unrivalled opportunities for enjoyment, spiritual refreshment and in turn supporting the nation's health and wellbeing.

The need and desire for young people to connect to the outdoors, but lack of access and opportunity, were present before the pandemic. COVID has simply exacerbated the inequality of access for many to the power of the outdoors.

Natural spaces are important places for young people to connect with the natural world and with each other.

In only 16 months, using the collective two million reach of the Access Unlimited partners, we have enabled more than 115,000 young people across England to connect with nature.

Through continued collaboration and funding, and without the constraints of a pandemic, we can achieve a collective vision of connecting ALL young people to nature and build an aspirant workforce for a green recovery.



Generation Green has been life-changing for so many young people.

Imagine a future where every child has the opportunity to connect with nature in a national landscape.



Together we can make it a reality.





Through the Generation Green project, Scouts have supported more than 55,000 young people to have incredible adventures and spend time in nature that they wouldn't usually be able to access. They've learnt how to care for their local environment and inspire others too. We're giving young people the skills they need for the big dreams, the skills they don't learn at school. With more support, we can help even more young people with the skills to look after our environment: gaining even more skills for life.

Matt Hyde, Chief Executive, Scouts



Through collaboration and against the backdrop of a pandemic, together we have achieved something ground-breaking of which I am truly proud. Further government funding would enable Glover's ambition to be achieved and create ongoing connections with nature benefitting future generations. If we fail to create sustainable connections to the outdoors then, without continued funding, we risk losing some of the nation's most vital assets that facilitate access for all.

James Blake, Chief Executive,
YHA (England & Wales)



Girlguiding's research and experience shows just how important nature and the outdoors is to our members. The Generation Green project has delivered over 115,000 outdoor opportunities to young people, demonstrating how powerful and effective our impact can be as a coalition.

Thanks to the support from the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, we've had time to test ideas through this project and to find out what works to help young people access the outdoors. Now, we urgently need further investment to be able to upscale what we know has worked and to explore and test new ideas with even more young people.

As we recover from the pandemic, we must ensure opportunities for young people to connect with nature and to be outdoors are more than just available, but that they are proactively accessible to those traditionally less likely to engage. With further funding we can do just that.

Angela Salt OBE, CEO, Girlguiding



The success of Generation Green has demonstrated the need for projects of this type and the ability of partners to deliver them. Now is not the time to draw Generation Green to a close, but rather to build on its success and momentum. We should be marking the redoubling of our efforts to engage more young people across the country in vital environmental issues, not the ending of this highly successful government initiative.

Mark Castle, CEO,
Field Studies Council



Generation Green has developed a successful model for engaging younger and more diverse audiences in National Parks. Many young people have already benefited but there is so much more to do. We have shown that our partnership approach to connecting young people with nature provides excellent value for money. It now needs to be scaled up to become the cornerstone of a green economic recovery.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of
South Downs National Park and
who leads the education portfolio
for UK National Parks



The government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund enabled our partnership to impact positively on the lives of over 115,000 young people during the pandemic. Connection to nature is not only crucial to a sense of well-being but also the foundation for people wanting to care for the natural environment. You can tell young people facts about what is happening with regard to global warming but unless they have felt an authentic connection with nature then they are less likely to care and less likely to take positive action. Collectively we call on the government to build on Generation Green's success with future funding.

Nick Barrett, Chief Executive,
The Outward Bound Trust



A message to our future funders

Collaborations between charities and not-for-profits are often spoken about as the model for success but are often hard to deliver.

We have proved it is possible; and this has been recognised outside the Access Unlimited coalition. Defra has praised the Generation Green model in its response to the Landscapes Review, calling for more partnerships like this to deliver the 25-year plan.

Generation Green represents five charities and 10 National Parks that compete in the same space for volunteers, media coverage, staff and funding, as well as sales to schools and individuals etc. However, we shared an aim – to connect children and young people to nature. This shared aim brought us together and enabled us to see the bigger picture and realise that we are indeed stronger together when it comes to impact.

Together we have made great strides in 16 months, but this should be the start, not the end.

Through the delivery of Generation Green, we have developed a tried and tested and successful model to connect children and young people with nature. The reach, outputs and outcomes speak for themselves.

Behind the scenes, Generation Green has also created new efficiencies and better journeys for those who work with young people within the coalition. We have shared processes for evaluation; developed cross coalition learning on recruitment of staff and volunteers; pursued joint approaches to marketing to schools by creating a one-stop webpage for schools and youth groups to access materials and experiences.



The benefits of Generation Green extend into communities where we have used local delivery organisations and groups, like So Sussex and South Downs Volunteering Network, to build capacity.

As the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) looks to honour its pledge to ensure that every young person in England will have access to regular out of school activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer by 2025, the Generation Green partnership provides a vehicle to achieve this ambition in an efficient way.

Generation Green is also an ideal delivery model to support the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy which will drive the UK's ambitions to become a world leader in climate change by 2030.

The Generation Green model works on many levels.

At the heart of this ground-breaking project, however, is the very real need to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to access nature in both AONBs, National Parks and other green and blue spaces.

Every child deserves a night under the stars in a national landscape. Every young person should be able to see the potential in a green career; and nature deserves a green generation.

Help us to ensure the Generation Green journey continues.

Anita Kerwin-Nye

YHA (England & Wales) Executive Director,
Access Unlimited founder and Generation Green Sponsor



The parks where I am, there's not really much you can do so I wanted to come to Outward Bound to see nature and fresh air. It was so green. Everywhere I looked you could see mountains and smell the fields. It's a smell you don't have at home.

Tori (14), Generation Green participant

Solo Surrender

"Welling with tears, with pride, but why?
For this day I have endured, enjoyed, made me cry.
Alone I have been, seen wondrous things.
But am I selfish for not sharing with friends and kin?"

I exchange smiles with passers-by, our beams contagious.
To enjoy such a tough task, is that outrageous?
No, not at all - the mountains ignite my soul!
"i fyny for nod" ... indeed, "up is the goal!"

Up and up I climb, Ridge over ridge, I soar, I fly.
Heart pumping, heavy breathing, on an endorphin high.
Stunned by the sun's kiss, golden over slopes and ghylls.
Blocked by tall shapes, I see shadows shape-shift across hills.

How lucky am I to witness candyfloss clouds pink.
Autumnal oranges on green, the contrast makes me blink.
If mother nature was to weep, would that dampen my spirit?
If past experiences could talk they'd say "come on woman,
bring it!"

I sit and close my eyes, my senses reignite.
Reminded that experiences are more than plain sight.
What's that I hear? Of course, Lakeland sheep!
You're never too far from the Herdwick's bleat!

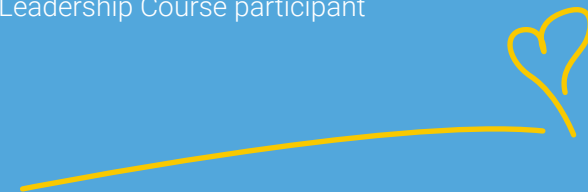
... or smell for that matter - oh no, poo-shoe strikes again!
Luckily it's soon masked by fresh air, my friend.
The most wonderfully waking, odourless scent.
Sounds dreamy now I'm trapped with smelly socks in my tent.

But oh the satisfaction, I feel smug and well.
Food always tastes so much better, after a day on the fells.
Now the warm embrace of down replaces the whip of the wind.
So content are my body and heart, I start to sing.

Welling with tears - so touched, that's why.
Heartfelt notes from dear friends bring an itch to my eye.
Alone I have been, such an empowering thing.
Words don't do justice to the feeling today brings."

Alexandra Ridge

Women's Outdoor Leadership Course participant





With a special thank you to our funders

This project has been 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



Generation Green was delivered by the Access Unlimited coalition

