

2021/ 2022 Annual Report

Our future. Now

Supporting a generation of young people to flourish.



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Chief Executive's Introduction



Whatever your start, you should get a fair chance to enjoy a happy, healthy life free from poverty or disadvantage.

Our Future Now (OFN) is here for young people whose start in life isn't equal and who face barriers to success even when the economy is thriving, and opportunities are plentiful. Here we report on year three of OFN where the environment and its challenges have never been greater for young people and support provided has never been more needed.

The OFN portfolio has walked through the Covid experience with communities and the young people they support. There is high demand for support and increased investment this year has enabled the portfolio to work with a greater number of young people than ever before, 6,388 (4,973 previous year).

Throughout the period, the OFN portfolio of 12 ventures again demonstrated their financial resilience and ability to adapt and innovate in the face of the restrictions that have been imposed, changed, lifted, and re-imposed. The leadership teams and staff across charities have been operating under immense pressure faced with unprecedented challenges. Through the period the portfolio did not stop delivering. This was vital as most other services were withdrawn or scaled back.

The Inspiring Scotland model of long-term funding and support has provided security at a time of unprecedented challenge. Strong and stable third sector organisations able to innovate and adapt quickly have been a lifeline throughout the pandemic and we have witnessed the collective commitment of the OFN portfolio to young people. Their resolve has never been greater as young people and their families face the cost-of-living crisis and the pressures this will place on them, alongside dealing with the aftermath and harms of the pandemic.

In OFN we have made a 10-year commitment to young people and are a third of the way through the fund. We have much more to do. We have developed a deep understanding of the needs of young people. We have a portfolio of partners who listen and are ideally placed to respond and support. We are fortunate to have committed investors and with your support, we can ensure that young people are provided with the tools and opportunities to transition to a successful future.

Thank you for your commitment to young people in Scotland which is reflected in your investment in Inspiring Scotland. Your investment in OFN has always been needed and highly valued but, in the post Covid environment it is absolutely vital.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Celia'.

Celia Tennant , Chief Executive

Our Future Now 2021/2022



£12.6m

Combined investment



12

Charities



6,388

Young people supported



25,258

Soft outcomes achieved by young people



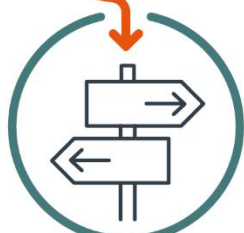
3,824

Progression milestones achieved by young people



3,579

Young people progressed to work
or further/higher education



- 934 (26%) Young people secured employment
- 1,442 (40%) Young people in education
- 858 (24%) Young people secured training
- 345 (10%) Young people completed structured volunteering

Addressing the Needs of Young People

The pandemic has exacerbated the already difficult life circumstances of many young people in Scotland.

Poverty has been growing in Scotland and the last year has seen a sharp rise in the cost-of-living. Families' already stretched finances are being pushed to new limits.

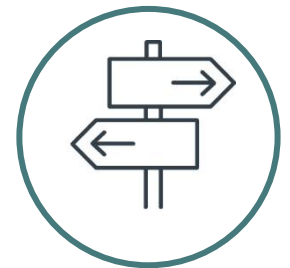
A quarter of children in Scotland are living in relative poverty and analysis by the Resolution Foundation suggests that the Scottish child poverty rate could be 29% by 2023-24 - the highest rate in over 20 years.

Young people being supported by Our Future Now live in some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities (70% in the top three deciles on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). Unstable homes, Adverse Childhood Experiences, exposure to violence, disrupted education, learning disabilities, experience of homelessness, mental health issues, bereavement and bullying are just some of the experiences that affect young people's confidence, resilience, self-esteem, aspirations and belief that they have worth.

70% of the young people supported by OFN live in the top 3 deciles of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

Our Future Now's Pathway

Poverty or trauma underpins the experiences of many young people that Our Future Now supports. Desperate to succeed, they face significant barriers through no fault of their own because of their start in life. They require support to develop the skills and tools necessary to progress in life.



By increasing young people's resilience, aspirations, motivation; improving health and wellbeing; self-belief and personal responsibility, Our Future Now creates a positive pathway for young people.

The development of life skills has always been central to the work of OFN and is the foundation on which success is built. The pandemic has resulted in these skills being lost or under-developed. This year's high number of soft outcomes achieved by young people is a direct response by the twelve ventures in the portfolio to address this need.

Progression milestones, such as qualifications and work placements, are the next vital step which this year have been more challenging for young people. Workplaces were closed meaning that job placements could not be undertaken. The achievement of qualifications reduced due to the disruption to learning and accreditation.

More intensive support is required for longer and Our Future Now ventures have worked hard to maintain young people's engagement, motivation and to enable them to progress on their journey. Pre-pandemic, the average period from engagement to securing a job or similar positive destination would be between 3-6 months, over the past year this has increased to 6-12 months.

Reaching Young People

The OFN portfolio has had to adapt to a challenging operating environment not only because of Covid, but also the substantial change in the employability structures in Scotland. Skills Development Scotland, the national training agency, and a key source of referrals of young people has been replaced by a new eco-system with responsibility devolved to local authorities. As with all change processes, this transition has been disruptive and will take time to complete.



The portfolio has built new systems to align with funding being sought from each individual local authority. This has had resource implications for the ventures, particularly those that operate in multiple local authorities. Well-established referral networks have become less effective or in some cases have been lost.

As a result, the portfolio is engaging young people through word of mouth, social media, community outreach and detached street work, through schools (to identify non-attenders that have disengaged) and other third sector partners. The ventures are skilled in this area, but this work has been carried out at increased cost to the organisations.

With a number of services ceasing during the pandemic, some young people have fallen off the radar. A number have not returned to school or have had very limited engagement since the first lockdown. Ventures can reach these young people because of their presence and trusted status in the community. Many young people have become withdrawn and the process of building a relationship and developing their confidence, resilience and motivation can be lengthy. The cohort of young people supported through OFN has always been at risk of falling through the cracks between different services however this risk has increased significantly during the pandemic as the infrastructure has changed. The portfolio is seeking out the young people for whom this has been the case and is working hard to identify those that are still engaged but 'at risk' to ensure that this situation can be prevented.

The OFN portfolio is adaptable and responsive to change. The ventures have been proactive in connecting with the new infrastructure locally to ensure an awareness of their work and the support that they are providing to young people facing the greatest barriers. It is likely that the system will be in transition for some time to come and it is therefore crucial that the portfolio continues to reach and support young people in this changing environment offering consistency and continuity at a time when they are facing unprecedented challenges.



The Matrix

Our commitment to being data driven is ensuring that we can be responsive in this dynamic environment. We continue to invest in The Matrix which tracks young people's unique journey from engagement to a successful outcome and beyond. This also captures vital demographic data and information about young people's experiences that ensures that an appropriate, trauma-informed response can be provided. Our data driven approach, together with our 14 years of experience gained through the 14:19 Fund and OFN, is supercharging our response. The data ensures that the support we provide is aligned with young people's needs as they evolve. It provides a live monitoring system of the support that is required, enabling a relevant response, and ensuring continuous improvement.

Employment Market

For the first time since records began, there are more job vacancies in the UK than unemployed people according to the latest Monthly Labour Market figures (ONS Labour Market Overview, UK: June 2022).

Although unemployment is at a historic low, the vacancies and opportunities that exist are of little relevance to the young people supported through Our Future Now. A large proportion of the current opportunities are skilled jobs which are completely out of reach for young people that are far from job ready and are seeking entry level jobs, at least initially.

The job market for Our Future Now young people has changed because of the pandemic. There are vacancies in hospitality, partly due to the reduction in migrant workers, and this is an industry that is trying to transform to be more accessible and attractive to young people. The care sector is also undergoing reform and it is hoped that this can become a more viable employment option for young people. We have also seen an increase in opportunities in construction which attracts a large number of young people supported through OFN.

Hospitality

Care

Driving

Warehousing

Construction

New opportunities are more accessible if young people have essential qualifications such as a driving licence, fork-lift licence, certificates to work in a warehouse and essential construction qualifications to allow access to a site.

The Our Future Now portfolio equips young people with these essential qualifications whilst continuing to develop their extensive employer links in this multi-faceted and dynamic labour market. Innovative approaches are required to ensure that the needs of employers are matched with suitable young people that have gained the right skills through the ventures and are job ready.

Jobs are becoming greener as we focus our collective attention on our net zero aspirations. In line with Scotland's National Performance Indicators, there is a focus on fair work providing rates of pay that ensure that people can meet their living costs. This is growing in importance as young people are braced for a severe cost-of-living crisis.

This year Our Future Now Venture, Move On, developed a pilot programme to support 20 young people to gain a driving licence.

Once a basic licence has been obtained, a pathway for further training is offered including a van driving licence, forklift licence and ultimately, a CPC & HGV 2 & Truck licence. The pilot will operate from Move On's FareShare warehouse in Glasgow where extensive work experience will also be completed.

This programme provides an opportunity that would be out of reach for the majority of young people if not provided through OFN.



The first intake of young people on Move On's Driving Licence Pilot

Financial Investment

In Year Three (2021/ 2022) Our Future Now combined fund investment was £12.6M.

An integral part of the funding agreement between ventures in the fund and Inspiring Scotland is the target to attract 100% match funding from other sources. We are pleased to report that the match funding target has been exceeded, totalling £9.4m (£7.76m last year).

Inspiring Scotland received additional private investment for distribution to the ventures for the emergency response to Covid-19. The portfolio also attracted additional Covid emergency funding from a range of sources. This additional funding is a one-off which offset some of the revenue lost through trading due to restrictions.

The increased financial investment allowed 22% more young people to be supported compared to the previous year. The ventures have used the new skills acquired during the pandemic to support more young people and in many cases to increase the geographic footprint of their operations.

A Robust Portfolio

The OFN portfolio comprises strong, stable organisations that can innovate and support young people in this dynamic environment. This capacity has been built over the years of the 14:19 Fund and OFN through the Inspiring Scotland model. Although leadership teams and staff across Our Future Now ventures have been operating under immense pressure in recent times, our collective commitment to young people has never been greater.

Support from Inspiring Scotland has provided security at a time of unprecedented challenge for the ventures and the long-term flexible nature of OFN investment enables the portfolio to optimise every pound spent, delivering the best possible outcomes for young people.

The OFN portfolio is ready for the challenge of supporting young people through Covid recovery and the cost-of-living crisis. The ventures have the experience, momentum, and skills to work with those that are most isolated and disadvantaged to ensure that they have opportunities and support to succeed.





Young Modern Apprenticeships at FARE's social enterprise nursery

Long Term Flexible Organisational Support

Jimmy Wilson, Chief Executive at FARE Scotland reflects on the support provided by Inspiring Scotland, helping to build resilience which underpinned FARE's response during the pandemic.

“FARE Scotland has always been an ambitious and entrepreneurial organisation, focused on improving the lives of the communities we support in Easterhouse and surrounding communities in Glasgow. Inspiring Scotland support matched our ambitions and has enabled us to capitalise on opportunities.

One of the biggest benefits of Inspiring Scotland's funding is that it has been long term and flexible. We've received 13 years of funding, growing our turnover from £500k to £2.7m during this time. The funding has been focused on developing the whole organisation, not just an individual project and that is very rare for third sector organisations, too used to operating on short term funding which limits the opportunity for growth.

In addition to funding, a key driver has been the input of Inspiring Scotland Fund Managers who, as well as being a critical friend, have supported leadership development. This has been enhanced by coaching and mentoring provided through the Specialist Volunteer Network. The impact of this support has had a ripple effect throughout the organisation.

Input has also extended to bolster the governance of FARE. Inspiring Scotland helped to identify Trustees, again through the Specialist Volunteer Network with a range of different skills and wealth of experience to draw upon. This has not only strengthened our overall governance, but also meant that during the pandemic, we were able to maintain momentum and manage some very complex and demanding negotiations.

Over the past 13 years, as well as increasing work in schools to support more young people through the transition of leaving, we've also expanded our social enterprise activities. In 2020 FARE took on the management of a large sporting complex FAREPlay Stepford, and in August 2021 opened a new nursery for children 2-5 years, FAREPlay Nursery.

Through these social enterprises, FARE delivers industry focused 6-week employability courses aimed at young people who are 16 to 24 in sport and early years. This sits alongside a range of other industry courses we have been delivering for some time in hospitality, retail, and creative industries.”

Looking to the future, Jimmy and the team at FARE are well aware of the impact of the pandemic on the communities they support and the reality of growing poverty.

“The effects of the pandemic, along with the huge increase in cost of living means we are seeing levels of poverty not seen for decades. With growing fuel bills and the increased cost of food, families who were already struggling, living hand to mouth are now faced with even more financial pressures and strain through poverty.”

“FARE Scotland need to gather all the resourcefulness we possess to help the communities we serve, and we are in a good position to do this, in many ways because of the long-term support that we have received from Inspiring Scotland.”

Lee's Story

At the age of 5 Lee's Dad left the household. Lee's Mum struggled with the pressure of being the single source of finance, a single parent, juggling her sons' needs and day-to-day life. Lee recognised this change in his mum's wellbeing, and at 12 years old was taking on some responsibilities to help his family out.

Financial pressures only increased, losing tax credits and family allowance coupled with rent increasing and the rising cost of living, locking Lee and his family further into poverty.

Lee had his heart set on staying on to 6th year and hoped to get some support transitioning from school to college where he wanted to study Sound Engineering. However, at the start of 6th year Lee was handed his timetable back and was told the school couldn't offer him much, which made him feel rejected and dampened his aspirations.

Lee had missed the cut-off date for college applications, meaning he had to wait until the next intake. He left school with no positive destination, limited financial support, feeling lost and without the proper support or direction to help him progress in his career path.

During the summer of 2021 and through Our Future Now funding, Lee saw a post on social media advertising FARE Scotland's Creative Industries course, covering Sound/Music production and Film/TV production. Lee applied and excelled throughout the course - picking up a variety of new skills, and networking with some of Glasgow's most established music artists. He even got one of his groups newly produced tracks played on the local radio!

Alongside this, the course helped Lee's mental health and wellbeing, and gave him a true sense of purpose, direction, and motivation. Through the support of FARE staff, Lee progressed onto the FARE Sports programme before moving on to a full-time volunteering role and then a paid Modern Apprenticeship.

Lee secured additional funding for a Mac recording bundle through Inspiring Scotland, instantly equipping him with the tools he needs to progress in his journey to becoming a sound engineer.

FARE Scotland was there to catch Lee and prevent him falling through the cracks in support. He felt dejected and hopeless when he was rejected by his school. This was a pivotal point in Lee's life and had FARE not been there to engage him positively, Lee could have continued on a negative spiral. By boosting his mental health, giving him a sense of purpose and crucially, relevant opportunities, FARE created the possibility of a positive future for him.

Lee wants to build his skills within this industry and give back to his local community. He continues to volunteer to help other young people, who may have been in a similar position and help them learn sound engineering and music production skills, giving them creative tools and a positive activity in their life. Lee is passionate about helping and inspiring others who may have been through a similar upbringing and faced financial difficulties.

*Name has been changed in this case study.

Thank You

Year three of OFN has been difficult for many reasons but we have risen to the challenge. Our portfolio partners have walked through the Covid experience with young people across Scotland and made a positive difference in their lives.

We know existing problems have been exacerbated and new ones are developing. Supporting Covid recovery, reducing child poverty and maximising household income will be important as we continue to support young people through the remaining years of OFN.

Working together we know we can make a difference. Within the OFN fund and portfolio we have the skills, experience, and collective determination to help more young people and ensure they have the opportunity to flourish and make a success of their lives.

This work is only possible because of the support of investors who share this commitment. Thank you for being with us.

The OFN Portfolio



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A company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland, No. SC342436,
and a registered Scottish charity, No. SC039605.