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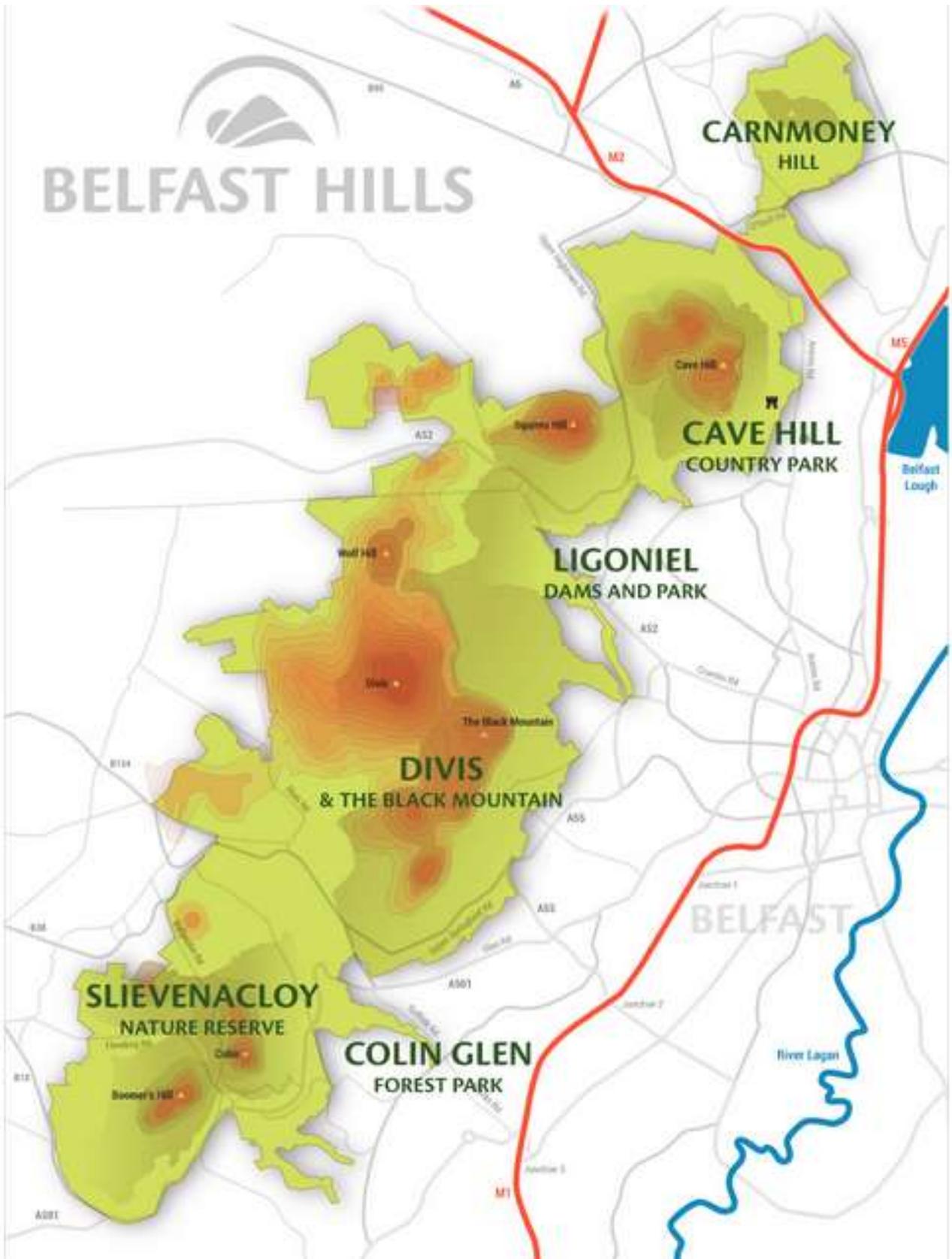
Belfast Hills Bright Future

EVALUATION REPORT



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BELFAST HILLS PARTNERSHIP





Belfast Hills Bright Future Project Evaluation 2021

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Introduction

The Belfast Hills Partnership was one of 31 programmes across the whole of the UK who had the opportunity to take part in the 'Our Bright Future' movement funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and overseen by the Wildlife Trusts.

The Our Bright Future programme (OBF) is a forward-thinking social movement that's about supporting young people so that they can lead progressive change in their communities and local environment.

It aims to tackle environmental issues and the lack of opportunity for young people by using one problem to help another. Ultimately, it's about unleashing the potential of young people, so they can make a big, positive impact and become an unstoppable force for good.

Overall programme outcomes are:

1. participation in the Our Bright Future programme will have positive impacts on young people equipping them with the skills, experience and confidence to lead environmental change
2. the Our Bright Future programme will have positive impacts on the environment and local communities
3. the Our Bright Future programme will influence change and create a legacy
4. the Our Bright Future programme will utilise an effective partnership working and a youth-led approach, leading to stronger outcomes for young people and the environment

The aim of the Belfast Hills Bright Future project is to build on the previous Belfast Hills Partnership Landscape Partnership Scheme project and undertake a wide scope of programmes to facilitate infrastructure improvements, community involvement and site action, via school and youth outreach work. Two members of staff were recruited to undertake the work – a Youth Outreach Officer and a Youth Engagement Officer. Specific Belfast Hills targets are:

1. 2,000 school age children per year will be involved in the programme
2. 700 school children per year engaged on a regular basis
3. 1,300 school children would benefit from one off activities and teacher education

The Belfast Hills Bright Future programme started in January 2016 and will run to the end of December 2021. This evaluation report focuses on the period of 2016 to 2020.



The Evaluation Background

This evaluation report pulls together the various quantitative and qualitative data collected over the past 5 years of the scheme along with the findings from a focus group of previous participants to reflect on their time with the Belfast Hills Partnership. Case studies collected throughout the project have also been collated providing snapshots of the tasks young people were involved in, along with what they gained from the experience.

Data collection over the duration of the scheme has taken many different forms depending on the activity, age of the participant, their level of involvement (one off or long term), their own ability level and the time available. These have included:

Quantitative data recorded:

- Number of participants
- Demographic information about participants
- Activities carried out e.g. number of trees planted, wildflower areas created
- Qualifications obtained through the scheme
- Any other outputs

Qualitative data recorded:

- Teacher/leader feedback forms
- Youth feedback forms
- Youth consultation exercises e.g. staff led workshops, peer filming of thoughts post activity
- Outcomes flower exercises before and after long term participation
- Collecting quotes, both written and spoken during activities
- Recording observed outcomes
- Case studies written by the young people themselves

This evaluation also looks at each individual project area undertaken through the scheme and looks at its specific outputs and outcomes against its aims and objectives. Other factors noted were volunteer time, donations in kind, people involved, changes that may be made if doing it again along with future recommendations, feedback and publicity.

Quantitative Outcomes

The key quantitative data is summarised in the tables below.

Year	School Children Regular involvement	School Children One off involvement	Total number of school aged young people	Post school aged young people involvement	Overall total young people
2016	587	1336	1923	152	2075
2017	1403	635	2038	570	2608
2018	1803	710	2513	1010	3523
2019	702	1710	2412	648	3060
2020	240	136	376	385	761
TOTALS	4735	4527	9262	2765	12027

This is over 2000 more young people than the total project target.

Accreditations gained	Male/Female /Other	Ethnic minority Background	Reside in top 20% most deprived areas of NI
647	54% Male 46% Female	2.7% (NI average 0.85%)	32%

Environmental Improvements 2016-2020	Area (m²)	Length (m)
woodlands planted	28175	
woodland management e.g. tree maintenance, tree thinning etc.	8716	
meadow planted	2209	
meadow management e.g. raking, strimmed etc.	5458	
scrub cleared e.g. gorse removal, bramble cleared, ragwort pulled	59786	
invasive species cleared	5772	
hedgerows planted		2307
hedge management e.g. weeding etc.	633	1459
paths cleared, maintained, created (colin allotments)		3366
new fence		34
habitat creation/management e.g. ponds cleared, lizard habitat management	620	
litter picks	97093	
Spring bulbs planted	12	

Qualitative Outcomes

The Belfast Hills Partnership scheme is one of 31 different projects across the UK. While each project will often have a different main focus/outcome, together they have had a collective impact on all four of the programme outcomes. For the Belfast Hills Bright Future Outcome 1 was its primary focus, with activities touching on the other outcomes.

Outcome one - Participation in the Our Bright Future programme has had positive impacts on young people equipping them with the skills, experience and confidence to lead environmental change.

Positive impacts have been broken down into the following 6 categories/areas:

- 1) Confidence
- 2) Environmental knowledge
- 3) Increased well-being
- 4) Communication skills
- 5) Leadership skills
- 6) Connection to wild places (attitudes and behaviours)

When obtaining feedback from teachers/youth leaders about what their young people benefited from, we often received a 100% positive response about all aspects. In reality this may reflect the enthusiasm and buy in from the teacher/leader as much as the impact upon the young person. However, it still indicates that the project had a very positive impact in the young people's lives and was fully supported and appreciated by their teachers/leaders.

6. Which of the following do you think your pupils have benefited from? Tick as many as you feel appropriate		
		Response Percent
1	Increased confidence	100.00%
2	Increased environmental knowledge	100.00%
3	Increased well-being	100.00%
4	Increased communication skills	100.00%
5	Increased leadership skills	100.00%
6	Increased connection to wild places	100.00%
7	Increased respect for environment	100.00%

The evaluation records for each project shows positive impacts of the scheme in much greater detail, however within this section a couple of key quotes have been pulled out to illustrate the effectiveness of the scheme in these 6 categories.

Confidence

"The boys felt a great sense of pride in their work & the fact that they have left a positive mark on their school landscape. Their confidence increased as they had achieved something very positive and had hard evidence of this. Such evidence is not always immediately available to pupils in the classroom." **Mary Murray St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School**

"I learned how to budget, how to work as part of a successful team and the workings of a project from beginning to end. I believe this will be very beneficial for future job projects." **Nathan McIlwrath talking about his project on Edmund Rice School's wildlife area**

Environmental knowledge

“Our pupils really benefitted from taking part in the John Muir....the pupils’ knowledge of the Belfast hills and its wildlife was greatly enhanced through the experience. The pupils live in a built-up urban area and many of our pupils would have limited experience of wild areas. They may recognise these areas nearby but needed help to appreciate the hidden secrets and importance of these spaces. Before participating in the John Muir award some of the pupils knew very little about nature, things that most of us take for granted. The pupils were fascinated by the interesting pieces of information they gained on the hikes. They particularly loved the hike up Cave Hill; they were blown away by the view from the top, none of our pupils had been on the Cave Hill before”. **St Colms High School**

Students have a greater understanding of what is right on their doorstep. Thanks to Belfast Hills Partnership they also have a greater understanding of the role that the natural world has to play within the community. Students have also gained a respect for wild places and the animals that live there. Great examples of this can be seen through how students now react to wild animals. **Lee Kelly, St Louise’s Comprehensive**

Increase well being

“Parents have outlined to us how pupils have developed socially, how the award scheme has undoubtedly increased their personal development and how it has encouraged their awareness, understanding and responsibility of their local environment. The boys have been out walking in all weathers and often covering distances of 6 to 7 miles and, as I’m sure the parents will corroborate, they go home at the end of the day exhausted but buzzing!” **St Gerard’s Special School**

“Being out in nature and making new friends has significantly improved my mental health during lockdown. I also don’t drive so I’ve been cycling to all of the activities across Belfast which has been very helpful for my physical fitness.” **Ryan Fernando**

Communication skills

“Because of the John Muir Award I feel like I’m much more confident at speaking my own opinion, I had never been part of an ideas workshop before and never had the chance to be in control of a project. I feel that I am also better at listening and working as a team”. **Mia Maguire**

I feel like I’ve developed how not to be shy on stage and to share ideas, instead of keeping them to myself”. **Young person in the drama group**

Leadership skills

“When I first got the spot as President of the Society, I was really nervous about the responsibility. Seven months later, I can honestly say it’s been the best part of my year. It’s provided me with so many opportunities, and the other Committee members were some of the coolest, most fun people ever. Would do it again in a heartbeat.” **Joy, Belfast Hills Society President and studying Environmental Management.**

"Being part of the Belfast Hills Bright Future project gave me the opportunity to gain vital practical experience to go alongside my university degree. I gained new skills in delivering outdoor education sessions, environmental conservation such as surveying, planting and habitat management and had the chance to benefit from employability workshops and interview training which was really helpful when applying for jobs. My experience with the project also boosted my self-confidence and encouraged me to go after other opportunities. Thanks to this experience, I am now working full time in a role that I love as an Environmental Engagement Officer, leading other young people in environmental activities." **Laura Sheils**

Connection to wild spaces

"I think this is a really fabulous project; it really connects our young people, living in a large housing estate with limited biodiversity to their environment. Pupils in all classes had a great interest in the Salmon project. Students were very keen to watch the progress of the salmon. It is an exciting project and has the possibility of a long-term impact as the pupils will recall in years to come their baby salmon returning to the Derragh river".

Christian Brothers School



"I would say that all the pupils gained a greater appreciation of our local, wild places. A few of our pupils have completely changed the way they think about the environment. One pupil in particular, who had a very negative view of the environment and the need to look after it, really benefitted from the program. By the end, he was one of the most engaged students. Pupils have discussed how they hope to go back up Divis with their families and why it is important not to litter." **St Colms High School**

Outcomes Flower

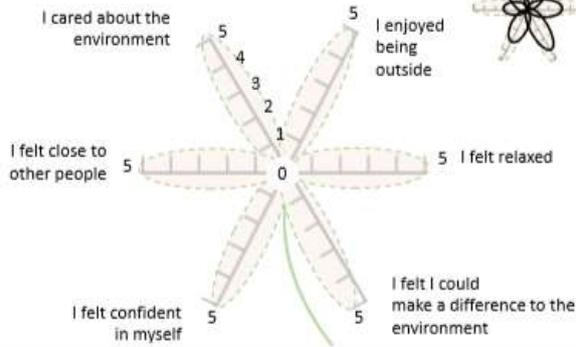
On a number of occasions during the project an 'Outcomes Flower' evaluation tool was used. The 'Outcomes Flower' is a visual data collection tool created by ERS and CEP. The survey captures information about changes in the attitude and outcomes for young people, as a result of their participation in Our Bright Future. Participants were asked to rate six statements on a scale from one to five, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. The statements include three well-being statements from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) and three statements relating to environmental attitudes. Respondents are asked to complete the survey twice, once rating how they felt 'before' participating in their Our Bright Future project, and a second time 'after' they had participated.

Outcomes flower: Mark on each petal below how much you agree with each sentence on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

Name:

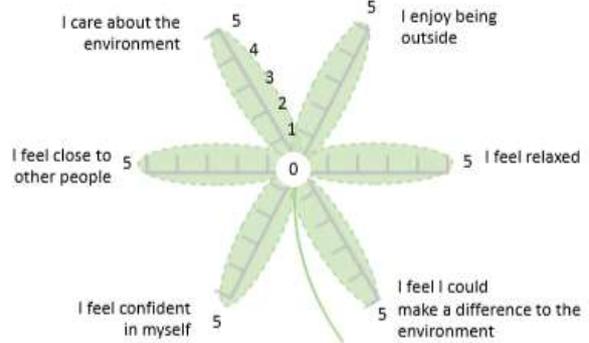
Date completed: _____

1. **Before** taking part in e.g.



Date completed: _____

4. **After** taking part in e.g.



2. How old are you?

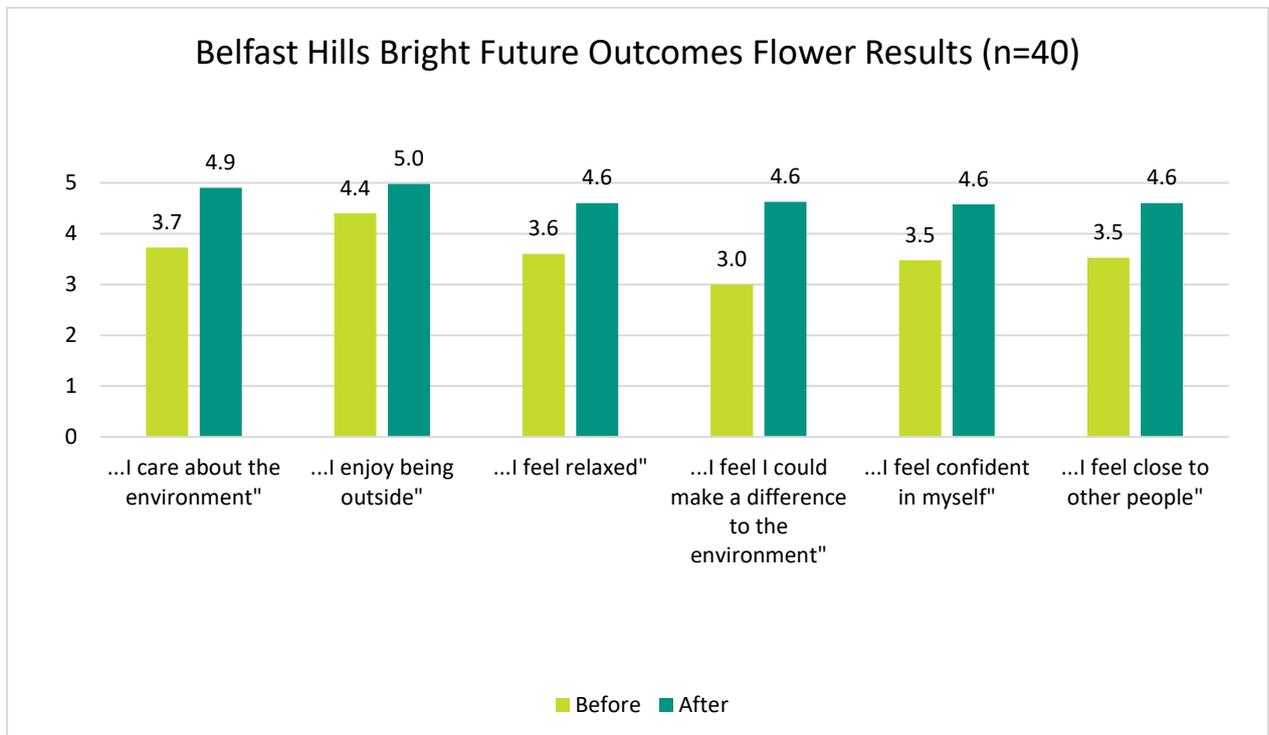
3. Gender?

Thank you for your responses!

5. What have you done differently because of being involved in?

Project manager to complete level of engagement (on completion of Q4 & Q5): One-off Short-term Long-term

The chart below shows that across all 6 statements an improvement was evident for the young people who participated in the scheme over a period of time.



Outcome two - The Our Bright Future programme has had positive impacts on the environment and local communities

The programme enabled a wide range of sites to undertake a variety of environmental improvements from litter picks, to native tree and wildflower planting. Some sites were school grounds or industrial sites within the Belfast Hills area and so were not accessible to the wider public. Other sites were public parks, nature reserves and local green spaces that are enjoyed by all. The quantitative outputs have already been provided, showing the extent of improvement works undertaken by the young people over the years; the quotes below provide a snapshot of the qualitative effects that these physical improvements have made on the local communities.



One very prominent bit of work that was undertaken by some of the young people was a wall at installation at Falls Park (a major urban park in West Belfast) which highlighted the beauty of nature all around and the need to look after it better. After its completion staff talked to members of the public who passed by to get their thoughts on the piece. Comments included:

"The mural is very well thought out, the colour scheme is beautiful and it really brightens up the park. I know bees have been in trouble so it's great to see young people taking responsibility and looking after their community and the environment".

"It's just lovely it puts a smile on my face when I walk around the corner and see it".

"It makes you think about nature, I recognise some of the flowers and the waterfall from being a kid and taking walks up the Mountain Loney".

"It's very colourful and nature orientated, brilliant that young people came up with it themselves, they did a good job, it's absolutely lovely."

Through Our Bright Future BHP staff also worked with local GAC Coach and his team of young girls to transform a bit of unused land at their club house in between lock downs. Feedback from Michael Culbert, GAA Coach is quoted below:

“Thanks very much from a Naomh Gall perspective on helping us transform part of our grounds into an educational /nature play area. The ideas and recommendations you gave us really inspired our teenage eco engineers to think differently about what they can achieve with a small bit of ground. Not only have they transformed this once unused bit of ground but they have opened it up to a whole differing array of users. Because it is beside a path in the bog meadows, teachers from St Louise’s Comprehensive School, who use the site for exercise noticed the project and asked if they can utilise it for education purposes. Also, it helped our girls get together again and socialise with each other safely on familiar territory which was very much a reward on its own. I will keep you updated with further progress and send along photos of our guys using and working at it when they are allowed”

The environmental outcomes table along with the quotations from various members of the wider community suggests that outcome two - The Our Bright Future programme has had positive impacts on the environment and local communities, has indeed been successfully achieved.

Outcome three - The Our Bright Future programme has influenced change and created a legacy

Youth Legacy

The greatest change and strongest legacy from the programme has to be the young people themselves. Time and time the feedback we get from leaders and young people alike is how much their involvement in the programme has changed them and their outlook on the natural environment.

Most of the younger children involved in the programme were from urban areas around Belfast, many of which score highly on the social deprivation scale. For some of these young people it was their first experience of being taken to a ‘wild’ space and given the freedom to experience it for themselves. The Youth Outreach Officer spoke how sadly the first reaction of such young people to wildlife is often to throw rocks at it, but through the John Muir’s and other activities they learnt to respect nature and want to look after their local wildlife.

“This scheme has opened my child’s mind to the prospect of working in the environmental education sector whilst also embedding in her the appreciation of our own wild places and the notion while thinking global we have to act local. She has become much more aware of the world around her and how her actions impact on it. Much more inclined to recycle now and understands that the best way to deal with insects is to move them on rather than hit them with something heavy!” Parent of one of the girls involved in our street art project.



St Gerard's Special Needs School took part in a number of conservation projects, their teacher said *"this was an amazing experience; the boys will remember it forever...they have improved in every area... all the leaders were experts and taught me so much. They were brilliant with my special needs class"*.

The programme has empowered young people to speak up, influence change and create a legacy. One such example came out from a feedback session with young people who took part in our drama project. *"I really enjoyed the project, I loved my character. I played a mother who had no interest in recycling and who felt annoyed at people trying to inform her about waste. As a result of our project we've asked the school to provide more ways for us to recycle plastic. This is only the start of it, the school are going to have to continue being more green."* It is wonderful to hear how the young people took the initiative to ask for plastic recycling bins at their school and plan that this is only the start of things to come.

Another teacher said that as a result of being involved in the OBF programme the school has formed a biodiversity team which is working with different departments in the school to transform the school ground and make them more wildlife friendly.

For some of the older young people involved in the programme their experiences helped clarify for them their chosen career pathway, often resulting in them undertaking further studies or apprenticeships to help make this happen. One such young person was Laura Shiels who completed various Belfast Hills Bright Future programmes which helped with her confidence, employability and skills. Laura has now secured a full-time job as an Environmental Engagement Officer and is now influencing hundreds of people every year by getting them outside enjoying nature and making their own difference in turn.

Input into Environment Strategy NI

In January 2020 BHP and UW OBF staff teamed up together to hold a youth consultation event at Stormont to enable some of their young people to meet with politicians and Civil Servants to have their say about the proposed Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland. Their comments form part of the formal consultation process and will therefore shape the targets set by Stormont and used as the basis of work for the NI Environment Agency for years to come.

Advocacy work

The OBF programme support network Share Learn Improve (SLI) provided training for staff enabling them to help give young people a voice via advocacy workshops. The Youth Outreach Officer used this template to empower young people to express what they were most passionate about in relation to their local environment and what steps they could undertake to make a change. This process not only resulted in various litter picks, tree planting activities and community space improvements, but it also helped to empower the young people, to help them see that they really could make a change.

Training and employment

For the older young people BHP staff developed various employability workshops, online advice videos, mock interviews and one to one training. During a focus group with some of these young people the positive impact that these opportunities had upon their career choices, ability to secure employment and simply increase their confidence was highlighted. Having skilled, confident young people entering the green employment sector who will in turn make a positive impact is a wonderful programme legacy.

Outcome four - The Our Bright Future programme utilises an effective partnership working and a youth-led approach, leading to stronger outcomes for young people and the environment

When asked about the strengths of the Our Bright Future Programme, staff talked about feeling part of a larger collective movement, learning from each other and together delivering outcomes greater than the sum of the individual parts. Mechanisms such as conferences, regional workshops, Keep In Touch webinars, the Green Room (an online platform for sharing information), and travel budgets enabled the 31 different programmes to get to know each other, share ideas and learn from each other's experiences.

On a Northern Ireland level the Belfast Hills Bright Future project and the Ulster Wildlife Grass Roots Challenge project meet on a staff level regularly throughout the project, and together helped organise events such as the OBF Belfast conference field trip, a joint litter pick and press event with the Minister for the Environment and a youth consultation event at Stormont. It is anticipated that this joint approach will continue beyond the life of the OBF programme.



On a local level the partnerships within the Belfast Hills Board and local community groups, as well as that of local schools and youth groups were built up and strengthened due to the quality of projects delivered. With groups coming back year after year to be involved in a number of the projects. This consistent delivery of outcomes for young people and the environment over the years has built up expectations within the local area. There is a risk that

at the end of the project a void will emerge if nothing is in place to replace the project and environmental engagement and outcomes will regress quickly.

Despite the broad topics being established early on, there was also built-in flexibility within the scheme so that projects could be directed by the young people themselves. Schemes were also reviewed on a regular basis and tweaked according to the feedback from the young people and their leaders. For groups with long term contact an advocacy template was used to find out what elements of the environment the young people really cared about, and helping them to draw up their own plan of action as to what they wanted to do about it, with the BHP staff supporting them

to fulfil their plans. Older young people designed their own John Muir projects, were given a budget to do a project of their own choosing or picked from a portfolio of options what activities interested them. Two major youth consultations in 2019 and 2020 were also held during the scheme to help establish future directions, each involving over 200 young people. These consultations will be used as the basis to seek new funding to continue to support young people, especially during the current difficult times as we come out of Covid19 restrictions and the associated physical and mental health impacts.

Delivery Changes/Lessons

In the early years of the scheme delivery largely happened as anticipated – through direct face to face contact with the young people. There were however two planned pieces of work that did not happen. It was hoped that the Young Farmers Club local to the Belfast Hills (Lylehill YFC) could be engaged in undertaking environmental improvements to local farms; however, despite multiple contacts and invites to the group no meaningful engagement could be secured. Staff also worked with the Ulster Wildlife Grassroot Challenges dedicated Young Farmers Engagement officer to see if they could join forces and work with Lylehill YFC, however they did not succeed in engaging with the club either. The local Agricultural College was also contacted and training courses on site in the hills offered – one group was going to come to Divis Mountain to do training with Belfast Hills Bright Future, however between bad weather and the tutor pulling out due to a bad back this never happened. It was hoped that it would have been revisited the following year, however due to Covid19 this did not happen.

Another piece of work that did not happen was engagement with the Council Community Planning process. Community planning was introduced in Northern Ireland in April 2015, so was very new to local Councils when the OBF scheme started in 2016. BHP staff contacted Council staff on a number of occasions to ask how young people could get involved in the process however it soon became clear that the mechanisms simply were not in place/Council staff had no real interest in involving young people with this process. BHP are actually involved at a senior management level so we are aware that this process only started in practice at a community level in April 2020. Involvement of young people will hopefully take place once this has bedded in.

In a project of this scale over so many years it should be viewed as a success that only two small elements of the planned project did not happen. It should be noted that although the Young Farmers Club wasn't involved in environmental improvement works on local farms, other young people (mostly from an urban background), did get involved in lots of different elements such as hedgerow planting and various surveys. This allowed urban young people to gain a greater appreciation of the difficulties involved in farming along with urban rural fringe, and help build positive relationships between these groups that traditionally have very little contact. Although our young people were not involved in the Community Planning process, they had the opportunity to be involved in consulting on the new Environmental Strategy for Northern Ireland. In January 2020 over 40 young people got to visit Stormont, hear from Ministers and DAERA staff about the new strategy, then give their thoughts on what the future of NI's Environment should be.

The year 2020 was a year unlike to other, with businesses and activities on a global scale grinding to a halt. All face to face delivery was halted for much of the year. It was a time where everyone was learning to adapt and go online. For part of this time staff were furloughed or not replaced while they were on maternity leave. It is unfortunate that this loss of face to face happened at a time when young people are facing new forms of isolation and mental health issues.

There was a focus on use of Social Media to connect with young people, with a series of fun nature based activities called #Hillsathome being produced, along with anti-litter campaigns, free wildflower seeds and general positive messaging. When groups were allowed to meet again, numbers were greatly reduced and all activities were kept outside, which could be challenging at times due to the weather. The team continues to be flexible as Government Guidance continues to change. To maximise youth engagement budgets were reprofiled and an extension requested until Dec 2021 to ensure that the project finished on a high note.

Programme Management, Staffing and Finances

The Belfast Hills Bright Future programme was managed by Lizzy Pinkerton who also wrote the initial application to the NLCF for funding of this work. This meant that there was a clear and consistent vision across all years of work. Lizzy had also managed the Landscape Partnership Scheme, upon which this project was based and scaled up from, providing a wealth of related project management experience along with local connections.

For a project spanning over 5 years there was relatively little staff changes (only maternity cover), this enabled staff to become very familiar with the scheme, expected outcomes and the best means of delivery. Most importantly relationships were built up with local community leaders, teachers, university lecturers and other youth providers, enabling easy promotion of the various programmes that were on offer. Comments back from teachers and lecturers alike confirm the skill and enthusiasm that both Jo and Patricia have brought to the role:

“Jo was excellent at her jobs and engaged confidently with all our pupils.” **Mary Murray St Mary’s CBGS**

“This could not have been done without the support and encouragement of Jo and the Belfast Hills Partnership. Thank you so much Jo!” **Lisa McCluskey, Our Lady & St Patrick’s College**

“The PGCE Geography students had a session with Patricia Deeney. Put simply, it was a superb day. Patricia was so enthusiastic and so knowledgeable that it was easily the best session that these student teachers have had”. **Dr. Stephen Roulston University of Ulster**

“Patricia is a born educator: able to enthuse others; great communicator; knowledgeable on the issues, research techniques and good pedagogic practice; sensitive to individual and group dynamics; and very effective in creating a productive learning environment.” **Dr. Niall Majury Director of Education QUB**

The Belfast Hills Partnership was awarded a total of £713,036 to carry out the project over a five year period. From the beginning of 2016 to end of 2020 it spent £596,328, brought in £12,648 financial support and £97,418 in-kind support. This illustrates the value for money provided by the scheme, with match funding at a rate of 18.5% to date. The underspend has enabled a further year of youth engagement to happen, helping compensate for the period of disruption caused by the pandemic.

Flexibility from OBF allowing budgets to be altered according to need was particularly important due to the impact on Covid19 and the need to adapt what projects were delivered and how. The ease of communication with the Wildlife Trusts who oversaw the whole scheme was a definite programme strength, with their sensible ground up approach enabling money to be spent where it was needed at that time being a reassuring.



*Youth Consultation
Focus Group*



Youth consultation Focus Group

A focus group of 6 young people was held on the 16th Feb 2021 to hear from them a bit more about their experiences being part of the Our Bright Future programme. Their comments are individually recorded below, however across everyone who took part there were common themes of enhanced environmental knowledge through practical activities, new skills (which for the older young people are important for their employability), increased confidence, new friendships and changes in life decisions as a result of participation. Their enthusiasm for their time with the Belfast Hills Bright Future Project shines through and many of them expressed a desire that funding could be obtained to enable other young people to benefit in the same way that they did.

Laura

Laura lives just under Cave Hill and was always interested in the environment, but hadn't previously thought of environmental education as a career. Laura joined the BHP as a volunteer in 2018 and has been involved in multiple OBF programmes over years, and just last year secured a job as Environmental Engagement Officer for the Belfast Hills Partnership. Laura said:

"I first volunteered when I was working in retail as wanted to get into environmental sector. One of the key things for me was an OBF work placement for 12 weeks working mostly with the Youth Outreach Officer and local schools. I hadn't previously considered working with kids, but my time there made me realise what want to do with my life- Brining young people outside really rewarding!

I also joined the Trainee ranger scheme in which I got to designed and deliver my own environmental education sessions. I believe these different experiences were critical to getting job.

My Uni course didn't give any practical experience; I got to do an employability day as part of trainee rangers, going through applications, how to answer questions and mock interviews. It's really rare to have a manager telling what you should be doing and how to actually get a job and really made a difference to my confidence to do a good interview.

Through the Belfast Hills Bright Future programme I also made some really good friends, we now have a group chat – can't wait till we can meet up again! So yeah been really good to have a social network especially during lock down.

When I started I was so shy with no confidence, I'm so changed now!"

Sophie

Sophie is from Lisburn. During her gap year she took part in the Belfast Hills Trainee Ranger Scheme. She also volunteered with the Belfast Hills Partnership beyond the Trainee Ranger Scheme, assisting staff with other environmental education sessions to increase her experience. Sophie said:

"I was on a gap year as I just didn't know what to do with my life and happened to hear about the Trainee rangers programme. I was the youngest on course, but got so much out of it. As a result of this I'm now doing env science – it totally opened my horizons as to what I could do. I'm grateful for that.

I found that the Environmental education stuff we did was right up my street! The kids were so great, it opened your mind to possibilities. Being outside does it!

The mock interview was also really beneficial, really brought out how to portray yourself in that situation.

I also made so many friends, these are my kind of people, so great to have met them through the course. Every Tue would be outside and had a fantastic day, learning new skills."

Aaron

Aaron lives in Ballymurphy at the foot of the Black Mountain in one of the most deprived areas in Belfast, however due to his childhood exploring the hills he gained a real interest in the animals that live there, and just needed a bit of support and training in nature conservation. Aaron said:

"I always wanted to participate in something in my local area – the Belfast Hills Project has provided me with really valuable information to enable me to do more of own stuff outside of the course. For example how to survey wildlife. As a result I have found Pine martin on the Black Mountain (this is the first record of pine martins being in the area so is really significant) – if it wasn't the project that wouldn't have happened.

BHP is the only place with opportunities for people in west Belfast Hill, a place close to home.

I saw them doing litter picks and so carried decided to organise my own in my local area, if it wasn't for the BHP I wouldn't have done that. I've taught others in my area.

No one else does that for west Belfast and getting them involved in conservation. The Mountain still feels wild, BHP gives the opportunity to get people involved.

This also has a ripple effect, as I can now teach others....Teaching community that they need to respect nature".

Joy

Joy is an international student from Lebanon who was studying Environmental Management at QUB when she became involved with the Belfast Hills Bright Future programme when she arrived in Northern Ireland for the first time. Joy said:

"Five years ago I arrived in Northern Ireland as an international student. I saw the hills from the city and wanted to go there! So I started volunteering with the Belfast Hills QUB society and actually ended up became a committee member!

We have now taken loads of people up to the hills to do tasks and their own thing, what makes them happy. Young people from all walks of life have become really active e.g. history students, film studies students.

Through the support from Patricia (OBF Youth development officer) I applied for funding and organised loads of things. For example I applied for funding from QUB for a nature photography workshop.

As a committee we asked people what they wanted to do and got loads of people up there! Patricia gave us space for us to come up with own ideas and make connections, help with applications.

I've got so much out of the project, if you look at my CV its all Belfast Hills, it's insane! It's taken me such a long way. I want others to be able to have the same opportunities that I have had".

Victoria

Victoria is from Dromore but lives in Belfast, she first got involved with the Belfast Hills Partnership back in May 2018, when she took part in a Development Week internship. Following this, she then carried out a project for the Belfast Hills as part of her final year geography module – Geography at Work in October 2018. More recently, Victoria is now a current member of the Environmental Skills Programme. Victoria said:

“I was studying geography at Uni when I got involved in the Our Bright Future programme. I found that we didn’t do practical skills in Uni, so I signed up to the Belfast Hills Environmental skills course. It has really enriched my employability, if hadn’t have done it I wouldn’t be able to apply for loads of jobs.

My Uni had 90 people in class, so it was great with BHP to be in a small group and get a chance to do things yourself.

I also went on to do a placement called Geography at work with BHP looking at the impact of visitor numbers on Black Mt impact on wildlife. This was also really beneficial and introduced me to other agencies such as the National Trust.

It was really refreshing break from work/Uni, getting outside – getting really nerdy about identifying twigs, mushrooms etc! Everyone was helping each other, it was really nice to be part of a group...”

1



Case Studies

Case study “Joy”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Joy (Farah Hamdan)	Female	23

Case study (300-500 words)

Joy first started volunteering for the Belfast Hills Partnership back in January 2017, during her first year at Queen’s University studying a BSc in Environmental Management. *“I wanted to get as much hands-on experience in conservation as possible, and BHP provided the perfect opportunity for this. It was especially exciting to me as BHP works on preserving and protecting local wildlife”.*

A regular at our Belfast Hills Society events, Joy showed her commitment and dedication by becoming the president of the society in September 2017. She got to experience a leadership role, not only planning upcoming events and helping to attract new members, but also helping with the various administrative tasks of the society like handling finances, social media and membership details. *“In my second academic year (2017-2018), being president of Queen’s student society was another major learning experience. It helped boost my self-confidence as I took on a more active role in bringing other students out and getting them involved!”* Joy put her new found confidence to good use, by securing extra funding for the society from Queen’s University, to run a large nature photography event for her fellow students in May 2018.

Thanks to the OBF project, Joy has been able to participate in an increased range of activities with the BHP, specifically tailored to her as a young person. She attended a week-long training programme in the Belfast Hills, called the ‘Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme’ in March 2018. This introduced her to a wide variety of career possibilities as well as providing the chance to develop practical skills, knowledge of the sector and provide the opportunity to meet

with individuals working locally in the environmental industry. It also earned her the John Muir Discovery Award. She enjoyed this experience so much, that she decided to aim for the next level of the award, the John Muir Explorer Award, and further volunteered in the spring and summer assisting the Belfast Hills with their woodland resilience project. This involved Joy carrying out research looking at mitigation strategies for Ash Dieback in a woodland in the Belfast Hills. As well as gaining two levels of the John Muir Award, Joy also received a 100 hour Millennium Volunteer Award, to recognise her efforts and for giving so much of her time to BHP.

In 2018 - 19, Joy went away on her placement year from University. Upon her return to Belfast, and despite being in the final year of her degree, she returned to volunteering. This time she created her own fundraising campaign to raise money for the BHP. Setting up a 'Bring your own cup' initiative at the Queen's student village coffee shop. She acknowledges, *"throughout my time volunteering, I got to see what a career in conservation really entails: it's not just exciting field days, but also bad weather, muddy and difficult field work, as well as a lot of desktop studies and report writing."*

She is now doing an MSc in Conservation Biology, and hopes to soon have a rewarding career in conservation and environmental management.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Joy's passion for helping the environment, and determination to learn new skills, has meant she has availed of every opportunity with the OBF project. Not content with simply volunteering her time, Joy took on leadership roles to help direct and influence change, becoming the president of the Belfast Hills student society, and creating and running her own fundraising campaign.

Case study “Liang”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Liang Qingxiao	Female	25

Case study (300-500 words)

Liang started volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership in 2019, after moving to Belfast from Malaysia, to study an MSc in Parasitology and pathogen science. She says *“as an international student, I would like to experience the life of local people, and enjoy the greenness around Belfast city”*. She acknowledges that volunteering with BHP is less about helping with her future career, and more about developing her communication skills and giving her the chance to explore a very different place than she is used to. *“The best experience I got from the BHP volunteering event is able to communicate with and learn from the team leaders and other volunteers, they told me a lot from the natural knowledge, usage of tools and things about Belfast area. It gives me lots of chances to practice my language skills. I also know better about the routes in Belfast, be familiar to the hills and parks at the north and west Belfast. It helps me to know better around Belfast city I'm living, which has so many different from the megacities I used to live.”*

Liang continued volunteering with BHP throughout 2020, despite the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 global pandemic. She says that volunteering with the Belfast Hills has really helped her get through it. *“Especially during the epidemic lockdown period, I wasn't able to access the facilities I needed, the volunteering work gave me some support in mental health.”*

Liang's time with the Belfast Hills has not only supported her through lockdown and introduced her to the local environment, but it has also helped her gain lots of practical conservation experience. She has had her commitment, skills and experience recognised so far, by earning a 50hour Millennium Volunteers Award, and is already on target to reach the 100hour Award shortly.

Liang is now a PhD student, researching the anti-inflammation and anti-bacterial effects of medicinal value. She hopes to join more volunteering events with the OBF project and get to more places around Belfast.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Liang started volunteering with the BHP, despite being new to a city and language. She has shown her determination to overcome these barriers and develop her communication skills, by regularly attending volunteering events even during a very challenging time, with the covid-19 global pandemic in full swing.

Case study “Caolán”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Caolán Mulholland	Male	23

Case study (300-500 words)

Caolán started volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) back in January 2019, after hearing about us through his university. A current BSc Geography student, he wanted to get involved to meet new people and develop his skillset. He was particularly keen to increase his knowledge of native fauna and flora and spend time outside. During his time with the OBF project, Caolán has also noticed other benefits. *“Volunteering with the Belfast Hills has provided me a great opportunity to escape from the constant pressure of university and working part time. This escape was especially good during exam periods, volunteering allowed me to destress and enjoy working in the outdoors, which has been great for my mental wellbeing”*. In recent months, he has particularly found volunteering with the BHP a good escape from the pressures of covid-19.

Thanks to the OBF project, Caolán has been able to participate in an increased range of projects with the BHP, tailored specifically to him as a young person. He regularly attends meetups with the Belfast Hills Society, carrying out a range of practical conservation tasks. He has also demonstrated his enthusiasm and dedication, by offering to help run the society as a committee member. In addition to this, Caolán is one of the BHP’s representatives on the OBF Youth Forum; sharing and discussing ideas, opinions and experiences with other members of the Youth Forum and working as an advocate for the Our Bright Future programme.

All this experience has given Caolán a range of practical skills that he knows will be extremely beneficial to his future goals, as he plans to continue studying beyond his undergraduate degree. *“It has provided opportunities to work as part of a team allowing me to develop communication and leadership skills, this in turn has given me increased confidence in myself. The confidence I have gained, makes me feel like I can obtain my goal of continuing my studying at university. I believe that I can complete the interviews necessary to be accepted on to the masters and PhD programs that I am applying for.”*

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Caolán came to the BHP as a volunteer and through his passion for the environment and dedication, he has developed his skills and improved the local area, continuing to volunteer even through the covid-19 pandemic. The OBF project has provided him with a range of new opportunities including being a committee member of the Belfast Hills Society and BHP representative on the OBF Youth Forum, which has seen his confidence grow, and helped him towards his future career path.

Case study “Ryan”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Ryan Frendo	Male	22

Case study (300-500 words)

After graduating from his BSc degree in Marine and Freshwater Biology, Ryan knew he wanted a job in wildlife conservation, but he was new to Belfast and didn't have any connections here. *“While I was searching for a job, I thought it would be a great idea to volunteer and learn new skills to boost my employability, meet people already in the field of wildlife conservation and keep me occupied during lockdown. I chose BHP because of the wide variety and large number of activities they offered so that my skill set would be more diverse.”* He began volunteering with BHP in October 2020, a year marred with the Covid-19 global pandemic, which brought great challenges to everyone. Despite this, Ryan says that volunteering with the Belfast Hills has really helped him get through it. *“Being out in nature and making new friends has significantly improved my mental health during lockdown. I also don't drive so I've been cycling to all of the activities across Belfast which has been very helpful for my physical fitness.”*

Ryan acknowledges how the OBF programme with the Belfast Hills has supplemented his university degree and will help him towards his future career. *“I've gained a wide variety of skills and experience that will be essential in helping me along my career path such as maintenance on public parks, seed propagation and removal of invasive species”.* He has also enjoyed sharing his experience with others, *“working alongside BHP and the other volunteers has allowed me to meet*

some wonderful people who are already skilled in wildlife conservation and have opened many doors for me in life."

As well as gaining lots of practical work experience during his time so far with the Belfast Hills Partnership, Ryan has had his commitment, skills and experience recognised by earning a 50hour Millennium Volunteers Award, and is already on target to reach the 100hour Award shortly.

Ryan's ideal next step would be to gain employment in the environmental sector in Northern Ireland... *"a job/traineeship with Ulster Wildlife would be perfect, for now I'll keep volunteering and learning new skills"*. His end goal is to move to New Zealand one day and work to conserve the environment there.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Ryan came to the BHP during a very challenging time, with the covid-19 global pandemic in full swing. Despite this, he has shown himself to be extremely passionate and enthusiastic about the environment, grasping every opportunity to further his skills and try new things. He now volunteers with every available Belfast Hills group, up to 3 times a week. His hard work and dedication is evident each time he attends, even if it means cycling up a lot of very steep hills!

Case study “Alanna”



Case study details

Name:	Gender:	Age:
Alanna McDonnell	Female	24

Case study (300-500 words)

The Our Bright Futures project has helped change my life dramatically! Before starting the programme I had just given birth to my daughter and was working a menial part time bar job. Trying to juggle family life and late night shifts soon took its toll and I realised I needed to make a drastic decision.

I joined the project and immediately feel in love with all things outdoors. The team at Belfast Hills helped us achieve so much in such a short time, from soft skills such as working as team, communication and confidence, to practical skills such as working with different tools and conserving natural spaces.

Alongside this we also took part in the John Muir Award, this allowed us to gain qualifications while working outside. We learned key transferable skills such as surveying using kick samples, transects and visual surveys.

Because of this programme I realised my love for nature and became driven to help conserve and protect our green spaces. With the skills and qualifications I gained from the project I was then able

to go on and get an assistant ranger job with the National Trust and now help take care of some of the most stunning and wildlife rich areas.

I am now able to take young people like myself in guided walks and introduce them to wildflowers, butterflies or bumblebees which beforehand they would have walked past.

Without this programme and the help of the Belfast Hills, none of this would be possible!

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Before I took part in the programme I thought a career in conservation would be far-fetched, that only people with university degrees would be suitable. But through the programme I developed the key skills needed in order to help me gain a great job in a field I love with a well-respected conservation charity.

Case study “Ruán”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Ruán McCready	Male	24

Case study (300-500 words)

I’m Ruán, a budding biologist from Belfast!

Following three years of cramming in as much biological jargon as my brain could handle at university, I returned home with a head full of knowledge but a pair of hands lacking experience – a situation that many post-grads are familiar with nowadays. I spotted a post on Facebook advertising this amazing sounding training course through the Belfast Hills Partnership (just before the deadline!). I managed to squeeze in an application, portraying my passion for making a difference to our natural environment and earned a position among a likeminded group of people on the Trainee Ranger Scheme!

Throughout this course I began rapidly learning some super useful practical environmental skills on habitat management, bush-craft, tree planting, species ID, brush cutter use, mapping software and surveying. One highlight for me included leading a group of primary school children in a day of fun activities at one of our local parks, simply to engage them in the nature around them. Doing this honestly struck me firmly as something I want to definitely continue to do in my career. Very rewarding work!

During one of our sessions we had a talk and presentation from a member of Ulster Wildlife about a similar scheme that they were running which was a one year long nature skills traineeship. Naturally, everyone among us who was available to commit sent in an application. A number of weeks later, when I was the only one to receive an invite for an interview against all of these equally passionate candidates, I knew how competitive this must be so I approached it extra prepared. The afternoon before our last day on the trainee ranger scheme, I received the email that I had been accepted onto the traineeship with Ulster Wildlife and I was able to break the news at our final celebration event to everyone's delight. I am currently well underway on the nature skills traineeship which has been an incredible position for developing myself in all the ways that I needed following the trainee ranger scheme.

The only other thing I can say now is a huge thank you to Our Bright Future and the Big Lottery Fund for making this project available, and of course to the wonderful staff at the Belfast Hills Partnership for implementing the scheme and setting me on this fantastic path.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

It's hard to avoid bragging within these types of questions, but I'd like to think it's a success story, or at least the beginning to one. The position I'm in now is already immersing me in the skills and experience needed to walk into an environmental position. As much as the trainee ranger scheme helps to boost people towards employment, ultimately the more experience you have the better. Plus the timing of the two courses could not have been better with only a few weeks between them (which I luckily filled with a trip to Japan), so I didn't have to wait long. Above all else, I know for a fact this is the start of a rewarding career!

Case study “Laura”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Laura Shiels	Female	24

Case study (300-500 words)

I first started volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership a year and a half ago in pursuit of a new hobby and to gain some skills in practical conservation work as I have always had an interest in environmental issues. Being involved with the group only strengthened my interest and confirmed that I would like to pursue a career in the environmental/conservation sector. I had been unsure of what my next step would be after I graduated from university 2 years previously and, through volunteering I confirmed that this was the route I wanted to take.

I began studying a Master’s degree in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology in 2018 and was required to undertake a 12 week work placement as part of this. Thankfully the Belfast Hills Partnership could take me on as I wanted to build upon the skills that I had been developing through their volunteering programme, but also hopefully explore other areas of their work, specifically the education side of things.

I have been so lucky to work alongside Jo, the Education Outreach Officer here and have been able to assist with several projects as part of the Belfast Hills Bright Future project. This has involved outdoor learning sessions on woodland ecology and surveying as well as GIS training, orienteering, geocaching, helping groups complete their John Muir Award and delivering workshops to primary school classes on the importance of pollination. Being involved in these sessions has highlighted to me how beneficial environmental and outdoor learning is for young people. Every pupil can gain something from the experience and learn about relevant topics while having fun through hands on sessions that will stick with them past the classroom. It is clear to see

that they are also able to develop teamwork and communication skills, which they can take with them and apply through all aspects of their lives.

Being involved in the project has given me the opportunity to develop so many skills including organisation, communication, time management and presentation skills. It has been really rewarding to see the pupils get so much out of the sessions – both enjoyment and some new skills and knowledge, and I have built up so much more self-confidence than I had when I started; I never thought I'd be able to lead my own groups so quickly!

It has helped me narrow down what I might like to do in the future and given me the tools to go out and pursue the kind of career that I want for myself. I feel that I am now in a much stronger and more confident position to go after jobs once I (hopefully!) graduate at the end of the year and will be able to take everything I have learned with me into the scary (but exciting) big world of work and hopefully make a positive impact!

What makes this story special? (100 words)

When Laura started with the organisation she lacked confidence and was very shy in group situations. The opportunities that she has been given through the OBF programme has seen Laura really flourish, gaining confidence every day. Laura has really embraced the opportunities to lead groups and pass on her knowledge to other young people, providing her with a much stronger platform for applying for jobs in the environmental sector.

It has been a real privilege seeing Laura becoming more and more adventurous in what work she undertakes and teaching in front of large groups.

Case study “James”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
James Thompson	Male	25

Case study (300-500 words)

After graduating from his BSc degree in Environmental Science, James found that it was difficult to get employment in the environmental sector without practical work experience in the field. So he began volunteering with BHP in October 2016 to improve his practical skills. Thanks to the OBF project, James has been able to participate in an increased range of projects with the BHP, tailored specifically to him as a young person. He said “having always been interested in the outdoors, BHP appealed to me as it provided a pathway to generate relevant field experience, while also helping improve and protect my local landscape and meeting others with similar interests.”

Taking part in the OBF programme with the Belfast Hills, has supplemented his academic background knowledge with hands on experience and provided opportunities to develop skills in practical conservation, species identification & surveying, and receive other beneficial training in how to work with commonly used equipment, methodologies and software packages (QGIS, BatSound, etc.).

He has also noticed other benefits to volunteering with BHP...”Frequently engaging in team working activities has greatly contributed to improving my confidence and communication skills, eventually leading to the point of being able to guide small groups of volunteers on surveys.

Occasions where I have been able to pass on the knowledge to other enthusiastic Belfast Hills volunteers. Another unforeseen outcome of my time volunteering with BHP was the frequent chances to network with people employed in the sector, through volunteering tasks and BHP hosted workshops, lead by experts in their field.” He found this very advantageous as it helped him to make connections with potential employers, become more recognised, and provided invaluable insights to different roles in the environmental sector.

James’ also believes that his experience working with BHP prompted him to pursue an MSc in Ecological Management & Conservation Biology, which he started in September 2017 and graduated in December 2018. Here he furthered his academic knowledge while still continuing to volunteer with BHP, which he feels has allowed him to stand out from his peers in a competitive job market.

James proved himself to be an extremely enthusiastic and hardworking volunteer, even receiving numerous nationally recognised awards for his work. Due to this, he was also accepted to carry out a 12 week work placement with BHP, as part of his MSc degree. He assisted with the day-to-day operations of the organisation, whilst also completing a project on the use of GIS based modelling software to identify critical problem areas for catchment management and diffuse pollution mitigation. He said “overall, working with BHP has strengthened my employability and professional development, providing an opportunity to 'fill the gaps' in my CV, gain recognised certification e.g. Millennium Volunteers and John Muir award, and generate invaluable experience for securing employment in the environmental sector.” James is now currently employed at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), working in freshwater science/limnology; applying many of the of soft and technical skills he has developed with the Belfast Hills to monitor water quality, ecosystem health and the recovery of Irish lakes from historical polluting.

Despite being in fulltime employment, James continues to volunteer with the Belfast Hills as Volunteer Ranger for CaveHill Country Park, showing how committed he is to helping his local environment.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

James has shown himself to be extremely passionate and enthusiastic about the environment, grasping every opportunity of the OBF project to further his skills and try new things. He has taken part in nearly every aspect of work in the BHP, including practical conservation, training, surveying, developing his own project and even leading other small groups of volunteers. The experience he has gained has seen his confidence grow and grow, and we are delighted that it has helped him obtain full time employment in the environmental sector.

Case study “Ciarráí”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Ciarráí Culbert	female	13

Case study (300-500 words)

My name is Ciarráí Culbert and I am a year 10 student, at St Dominic’s High School, in Belfast. I am also a member of Naomh Gall C.L.G and that is how my team mates and I came to know about the John Muir Award and the work that the Belfast Hills Partnership do to promote environmental education and awareness of the hills and the wildlife in and around them.

My dad, who works alongside BHP, asked me and a few of my teammates, if we would like to get involved in the award, in the summer of 2017, and we spent four weeks discovering and exploring the hills that were right on our doorstep, but most of us had not visited.

I’ve had an interest in outdoor pursuits and looking after nature from an early age, most likely because my dad would always take us kids with him to the hills and forests, that surround Belfast, and also to the North Antrim coast, where we’d spend all our holidays exploring the forests, rivers and coastlines of County Antrim. So, being outdoors, in the hills and forests, and caring and looking after nature seemed to be a natural thing for me to do. From an early age I seemed to be able to explain the reasons why I liked to do this, this is why I’m looking forward to being on the OBF Youth Forum, and sharing my ideas with others.

The John Muir Award has also helped to guide me in my studies/career choices. I can’t picture myself being in a job where I am always inside. Through the award I have met inspiring women working in the outdoors education/outdoor pursuit’s environment and this is definitely a career path I would like to pursue myself. Because of the John Muir Award experience and the knowledge I’ve gained, I feel much more confident when giving a talk or explaining something in

front of others. I also feel that I've been able to appreciate the importance of team work, especially when completing our art project. As part of our Explorer Award, in summer 2018, we got the chance to come up with a campaign, which we called "bee one with nature". This resulted in us making a huge art piece, in Falls Park, for everyone to see – very cool! The Explorer Award was brilliant, we had so much fun trekking, camping, learning about native species and doing our bit to help nature.

As part of our two summers of John Muir so far, we have learnt about the importance of thinking globally but acting locally and myself and my friends can't wait until next summer to spend it outdoors in the hills again, in fact we are planning a winter expedition ourselves for the Christmas holidays!!!!

What makes this story special? (100 words)

This story is special because there is always negative news coming out of Ireland especially in and around areas of social deprivation and every citizen knows about the perils facing teenagers growing up in the modern age. We are a group of teenage girls who love sport, love the outdoors, love the mountains, and love to learn new skills and soak up any knowledge we can. Not only does this type of project benefit knowledge of the environment it also helps potentially shy teenage girls to make new friends and learn new skills in a fun, safe environment. Long may it continue.

Case study "Nathan"



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Nathan McIlwrath	Male	24

Case study (300-500 words)

Nathan started volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) back in February 2017, after being inspired by BHP staff during a fair at his university. He said "I felt that I needed to get some practical experience of conservation and ecological management. When chatting to Patricia at the Biodiversity Fair, she was so nice and extremely friendly and encouraging, and explained about the different activities that the Belfast Hills carry out and this was exactly what I was looking for. Once I took part in my first volunteering activity - tree planting - I felt like I was extremely welcome by everyone and from then on I really looked forward to every event that I could make it too."

Thanks to the OBF project, Nathan has been able to participate in an increased range of projects with the BHP, tailored specifically to him as a young person. He regularly attends meetups with the Belfast Hills Society at his university, carrying out a range of practical conservation tasks. He is also part of the Belfast Hills Volunteer Survey team, and helps carry out a number of wildlife surveys such as bumblebees, dippers and riverfly etc. He feels he acquires lots of skills on these tasks, as the sessions are often taken by experts in the field.

The OBF programme also supported him and three of his fellow students, with their own research project, when they investigated the potential of a local school's wildlife area, for both biodiversity and learning. Through this project, they not only offered suggestions on how to improve the biodiversity value of the site, but also created a learning resource pack to ensure the site was utilised as an outdoor learning area across all subjects of the school's curriculum. Nathan also gained a John Muir Explorer Award for his hard work, and said the project given him a greater range of project management and vocational skills.

Nathan also took part in a week long placement with the Belfast Hills Partnership. He carried out wildlife surveys, organised some of our GIS datasets and helped plan an event for Tree Week. He also assisted with an outdoor session, helping children from a local school clear invasive species, and build shelters. He said he thoroughly enjoyed the educational side of his volunteering.

Now Nathan looks forward to applying these skills to his MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology, particularly his research project which he starts in January 2018. Then he hopes to gain employment within the environmental sector, "the role of a project officer, ranger, or conservation officer would be my dream job. So long as I end up outdoors protecting and conserving wildlife and the environment I really wouldn't mind what my official title would be." Until that time, he plans to keep volunteering and further develop his skills.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Nathan came to the BHP as a student keen to increase his skills and get practical experience. Through his enthusiasm and passion to help the natural world, he has grasped every opportunity try new things and improve his local area. The OBF project has provided him with a range of new opportunities including practical conservation tasks and training, and also the chance to develop his own project, which has seen his confidence grow, and given him ideas for future career paths.

Case study “Tom”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Tom Meharg	Male	25

Case study (300-500 words)

Tom Meharg has been studying archaeology at UCD but lives locally to the Belfast Hills. Tom had heard about our Community Archaeology Outreach work and offered to volunteer his time during our dig. He was keen to not only gain some archaeology experience, but also to help share his enthusiasm for uncovering the past with other young people.

Tom was absolutely brilliant, giving generously of his time, knowledge and enthusiasm. Tom did not just observe as we might have expected from a student helper, but got stuck right in, ensuring all equipment was where it needed to be for the school children, leading workshops with school groups, giving a radio interview for the BBC, undertaking a flint knapping exhibition for the general public, giving generously of his time with individual visitors who wanted to see finds uncovered from the site. We often had to remind Tom that he needed to take a break and eat his lunch etc., as he was so busy on site helping everyone else!

Tom was actively involved in everything that was going on, discussing issues and ideas with the other archaeologists. Many of the QUB archaeologists commented to us that it was easy to forget that Tom was still just a student as his depth of knowledge was so good.

We would have been lost without Tom as part of the team.

This experience has helped Tom develop new teaching skills, and enhanced his confidence when communicating with different audiences; this in turn will boost his CV and help him when seeking employment.

Tom said "I came to the community dig to gain experience in outreach archaeology, and it became an important aspect of how I view the role of community archaeology. The importance of communicating heritage with multiple audiences, and the skills to do this, required me to engage with members of the public in many challenging ways. I will always hold this experience as an influential aspect of my learning, motivating me to include all people in our shared heritage and I am grateful to the Big Lotteries Our Bright Future programme for enabling me to have this opportunity."

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Involvement in the OBF project has given Tom the opportunity to be involved in the running of a community archaeology dig, teaching both children and adults about their local history, helping give them a better understanding of the importance of the Belfast Hills and why they should want to look after them for future generations.

We felt that Tom's involvement with this project was so significant we entered him into the UK Heritage Awards 'Heritage Angels' where he is a finalist in the under 25 year olds category. We are excited to see if he wins!

Case study “Eoghan”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Eoghan O’Neill	Male	24

Case study (300-500 words)

Eoghan started volunteering with the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP) back in 2012, after being inspired by BHP staff during a fair at his university. He said “I’ve always enjoyed hiking, climbing and exploring and my father provided me with an appreciation of our wild places. But BHP provided an opportunity to actively protect and enhance these wild places on my door step whilst meeting hilarious, dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers who made volunteer days a blast.”

Thanks to the OBF project, Eoghan has been able to participate in an increased range of projects with the BHP, tailored specifically to him as a young person. He was instrumental in setting up the Belfast Hills Society at his university, spreading the word among his fellow students and ensuring it’s sustainability for future years.

The OBF programme also supported him through his own research project, when he investigated the impact of footpath erosion in the Belfast Hills. As a local to Cave Hill, he was aware of the increasing problem footpath erosion was causing to important habitats at this site and the mounting health and safety risks that it would cause. Through his project, he not only offered suggestions for Cave Hill but also two other prominent locations in the hills; and even amended the organisations path survey to make it more user friendly for BHP staff & volunteers. Eoghan also gained a John Muir Explorer Award for his hard work, and said the project increased his

confidence and wellbeing. It has also given him a greater range of project management and vocational skills including public speaking, as he was required to manage the project himself and present the findings of his research. He said “I’ve enhanced my knowledge on positive environmental improvements occurring, rather than the usual bad news projects.”

Eoghan looks forward to applying these skills as he completes his MSc in Sustainable Leadership and then hopes to gain employment within the environmental sector and pursue his ambition to one day start up a responsible business that processes waste locally.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Eoghan came to the BHP as a volunteer and through his passion for the environment has grasped every opportunity to develop his skills and improve his local area. The OBF project has provided him with a range of new opportunities including developing and leading his own project ideas, which has seen his confidence grow, and given him ideas for future career paths.

Case study “Annoushka”



Case study details

Name	Gender	Age
Annoushka Bayat	Female	23

Case study (300-500 words)

Fresh out of university, like any ambitious ex-student, I started job hunting. But unfortunately, for any sort of environmental job having at least two years' work experience in the field is a necessity. To gain any sort of experience, even starting “at the bottom” wasn't an option because experience in the field was still needed – experience I did not have, yet. Thus, the hunt for internships and volunteer opportunities began in order to gain this crucial experience.

The Belfast Hills Partnership showed a lot more devotion to conservation and awareness of the environment which was a stark contrast against the rest of very generic volunteer programmes I had come across while researching for any sort of opportunity. But the BHP didn't stop there. They had specific programmes in place to further gain more specified and diverse experience in conservation, ecological planning, monitoring of biodiversity, mapping and many more to list.

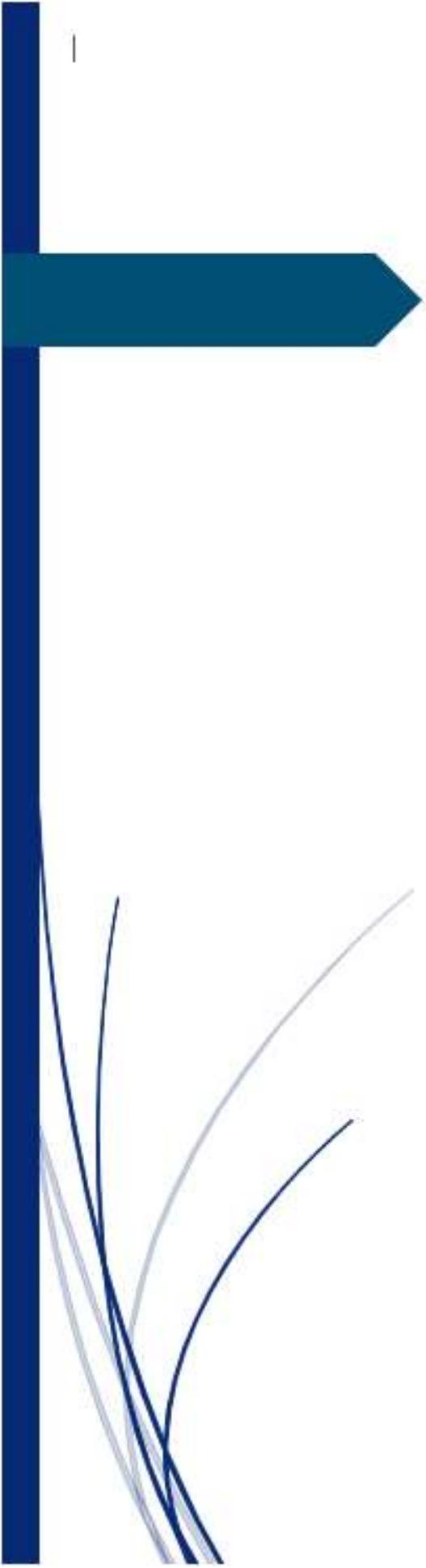
The BHP not only provide the relevant experience for working in the field, but it also provided further opportunity to participate in more specific areas. What sets the BHP apart the most as an organisation were the “training courses” they are offering in all sorts environmental and ecological divisions, and through the OBF project the opportunity to develop our own projects.

With me being an international student with little experience in the field, apart from that during my three years at university, the BHP has provided the “core” experience that is crucial for my future prospects in an ecological field. Thanks to the OBF project, I have built on this with the BHP who can now provide a very diverse array of skills and experience that no other programme I have seen has provided, which I needed to have on my CV.

The OBF project provides training courses hand-in-hand with the volunteer programme all under one organisation, saving me the two most crucial elements needed to accommodate my future education. This is the sort of experience for people like me, those who want to pursue the environmental and ecological fields, that is crucial in order to set us apart from the ever-increasing competition in the cause to save and conserve the world we live in.

What makes this story special? (100 words)

Annoushka came to the BHP as a volunteer and through her great enthusiasm and passion for the environment grasped every opportunity to develop her understanding and skills. The OBF project has opened new doors to her in developing and leading projects, gaining new skills which has seen her confidence grow.



*Programme by
programme Evaluations*

EVALUATION REPORTS

Project	1.1 Industrial Site Renovation
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott, Patricia Deeney
Aims & objectives	<p>Aughrim Quarry: The aim of the project is to establish colonies of wildflower and native grasses on the newly capped areas within the Aughrim Quarry using seed collected from the nearby Slievenacloy Nature Reserve and bought seed. In addition to the collected seed we will purchase seed from a local supplier and of local providence which will include yellow rattle. This will increase the species diversity and the introduction of yellow rattle will reduce the need for active management such as cutting on a site where this wouldn't be sustainable. Along with the wildflower and meadow creation new areas of woodland will be created and existing areas managed. This will take the form of tree planting on capped areas of the quarry and a systematic thinning and restocking of Japanese larch stands with native broadleaf. As part of the wider tree planting requirements across the Belfast Hills a healing in bed for trees will be created within the quarry grounds. Young people will assist in preparation of the creation of the beds along with prepping them for use. We will employ a contractor to make the beds and a secure compound to stop any rabbits getting into the area and nibbling at any saplings.</p> <p>Black Mtn Quarry: The aim of this project is to create new broadleaf woodland on areas no longer used for quarrying or landfill. These small woodlands will extend and enhance existing tree cover providing a habitat for wildlife while screening the commercial operations. Another objective will be to increase the tree stock on the site to mitigate against diseases such as ash-dieback should/when it strikes as much of the existing woodland has ash present. We will also aim to teach volunteers/young people about threats to our woodlands, practical conservation skills in woodland creation and management.</p> <p>Limestone Quarry: The aim of this project is to manage the scrub vegetation as this site is an important habitat for lizards. The common lizard, Ireland's only reptile, is so shy and elusive, most people don't even realise we have them in the country. Lizards need suitable areas to bask that are clear of scrub and other vegetation. They have been spotted in the Limestone Quarry area of Cave Hill Country Park, and to ensure this area continues to be a suitable habitat for lizards, we need to control the spread of scrub vegetation, so the lizards have somewhere to bask. We will also aim to teach volunteers/young people about threats to certain species, and practical conservation skills in habitat management.</p> <p>McWill Landfill: This project will see the planting of native broadleaf trees including hazel, rowan, silver birch and oak. These species have been selected as they are suitable to the site and abundant in surrounding woodlands. The planting will initially take place in clearings within the existing woodland with additional planting on other parts of the quarry. This additional planting will again improve other areas for wildlife and soften any visual impacts of the industrial activity on the site. As the trees grow, they will stabilise scree slopes and the falling leaves each winter will improve the soil conditions for new species of plants to establish. In turn, this will increase the number of insects and larger animals on the site. Planting species such as bird</p>

	<p>cherry and hazel that bear berries and fruits are beneficial for birds, while insects and pollinators rely on those with nectar-rich flowers. Trees provide a habitat for small birds and mammals, which attract predators such as birds of prey while giving all wildlife shelter from the elements. Again, this work will improve the view of the quarry to the surrounding community.</p> <p>Young people (including the Belfast Hills Queen’s Society) will be involved with various elements of the project including ground preparation, tree planting/woodland management as required and coordinated through the YDO. The students from the Queen’s society will also be given training in practical woodland management including tree planting.</p> <p>Mullaghglass Landfill: The aim of this project is to create new native thorn hedge on the perimeter of the landfill site. This has been identified by BHP surveys as an important but missing link in the network of wildlife corridors in the area. These hedgerows provide both a habitat for wildlife and a corridor for movement of species. We will also aim to teach volunteers/young people about the importance of hedgerows and wildlife corridors, practical conservation skills in hedgerow creation and management. This site is the main municipal landfill for all the surrounding council areas and as such provides quite an eye opener to young people about the disposal of their black bin waste and the impact it has upon the environment.</p> <p>Work West Industrial Waste Land: This project was part of a much bigger project by the Belfast Hills Partnership to transform a bit of industrial waste land into a tree/wildflower nursery with an educational area. The aim is not simply to create a sustainable source of local provenance saplings and seedlings, but also to educate local young people about the process of growing plants from seed; hence the need for a seating space big enough to bring in classes of young people.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Aughrim Quarry:</p> <p>Yr1- Initial measuring and prepping for a healing in bed Hydro seeding of site (0.8ha) Tree planting (300 trees) on site along with some thinning of Japanese larch Habitat survey looking at grassland and heathland, including training 4 young people involved</p> <p>Yr2- Healing in bed finished – 4 young people Tree planting on site (800 trees) - hedge (158m) and woodland (3869m²) – 5 young people (3x development week interns, 2 other vols (Sam and James T)</p> <p>Yr3- 5 Healing in bed maintained – 2 young people</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Black Mtn Quarry:</p> <p>Yr2- Black Mtn tree planting over 3 days in March (1000 trees) (12,418m²) with 3 young people Purple moor grass & rush pasture survey in September with 2 young people</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Limestone Quarry:</p> <p>Yr1-</p>

	<p>Tree planting at the edge of the quarry to extend the woodland and increase species diversity as mitigation against ash-dieback. Three young people involved. 5000m² of land improved.</p> <p>Yr 2 – Lizard habitat management with 2 young people. Environmental surveys (Lizard, newt, woodwhite and bat surveys) with 2 young people</p> <p>Yr 3- Lizard habitat management / Scrub Clearance with the Belfast Hills Society– 11 young people took part; many of whom were international students, and cleared approximately 130m² of scrub. Environmental surveys e.g. lizard with some young people (no's still to be confirmed) Limestone Quarry Path Maintenance over a couple of days – 3 young people involved – 760metres of path cleared.</p> <p>Yr 5- Lizard habitat management / Scrub Clearance with the Belfast Hills Society on 22.1.20 – 10 young people took part; some of whom were international students, and cleared approximately 30.6m² of scrub. Lizard habitat management / Scrub Clearance on 30.1.20 – 1 young person took part; and cleared approximately 7.4m² of scrub. Pond Clearance on 5.3.20 – 2 young people took part; and cleared approximately 20.4m² of the pond.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">McWill Landfill:</p> <p>Yr2- Tree planting (1000 trees) (1,317m²) – 3 young people BST</p> <p>Yr3 – MacWills tree maintenance – approximately 1,700m² of newly planted woodland (planted in Year 2 with young people see above) was checked and rabbit guards were removed – with 1 young person involved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mullaghglass Landfill:</p> <p>Yr2- Hedge planting on site (235m) (2000 trees) with 19 young people from 4 different groups over 4 separate days (BHP vols; NRC Prince's Trust; Belfast Hills Society; Colin Glen Prince's Trust) 12 young people participating in the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme were introduced to waste disposal taking place in the Belfast Hills and educated in how you marry seemingly opposing viewpoints like biodiversity and industry. They were also presented with lesser known jobs in the environmental sector as they were introduced to the Mullaghglass environmental scientist and learnt how the landfill owner limits the negative effects of the site on the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Yr 3- 10 young people participating in the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme (benefits/topics as outlined above). One of the students impressed the site manager so much with her questions, that she was offered a voluntary placement! They also planted 16 trees in an area approximately 100m² in size. 5 young people from Prince's Trust - Girdwood Community Hub – planted a hedge in Mullaghglass approximately 40metres long. They were also given a talk by Gary the site manager and were introduced to the issue of waste disposal.</p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;">Work West</p> <p>Yr 4- Contractor brought in to transform the disused industrial site into a series of beds, paths and seating area. Yrs 4 & 5- Various groups of young people have helped planting out seedlings, weeding etc on the site. Educational worksheets have been produced ready for school visits once lockdown ends.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Young people have a much greater appreciation of the biodiversity value of industrial sites, and the potential of site restoration works to make a positive impact on not only site aesthetics, but also wildlife.</p> <p>Young people have gained practical conservation skills regarding creating healing in bed, growing plants from seed, wildflower planting and tree and hedge planting. Including information on ash-dieback and how it will impact our native woodlands; these are transferable skills that will be useful to enhance their CV and help gain employment in the green economy.</p>
Volunteer time	<p>Aughrim Quarry: Yr1- Healing in bed planning assistance from quarry staff = £75 Yr2- Healing in bed assistance from quarry staff = £750</p> <p>Limestone Quarry: Yr3 – Judy Meharg - Belfast Hills Society event - Clearing scrub for lizards in Limestone Quarry 31.1.18 – demonstration and talk on habitat management for lizards = £75 Yr5 – Judy Meharg - Belfast Hills Society event - Clearing scrub for lizards in Limestone Quarry 22.1.20 – demonstration and talk on habitat management for lizards = £75</p> <p>Mullaghglass Landfill: Yr2- Gary Flaherty, manager of the Mullaghglass Landfill site has spoken to the young people and explained what goes on and shown them around – time totalling £85.73 Yr3- Gary Flaherty, manager of the Mullaghglass Landfill site has spoken to the young people and explained what goes on and shown them around – time totalling £53.58</p>
Donations in kind	<p>Aughrim Quarry: Yr1- Tree provision by the WT = £368 Hydro seeding work by Eco-seeds = £600 Yr2- Sand provision by quarry = £680 Tree provision by the WT = £400</p> <p>Black Mtn Quarry: Yr2- Tree provision by the WT = £500</p> <p>Limestone Quarry: Yr1- Tree provision by the WT = £368</p> <p>McWill Landfill: Trees provision by WT = £500</p>

	<p>Mullaghglass Landfill: Yr2-Trees provision by WT = £1000 Yr3-Trees provision by WT = £150</p> <p>Work West: Local composting company Natural World Products supplied the compost for the bed. Approx. value £2000</p>
Any changes?	Some of the planned areas for planting were very stoney ground so new areas had to be chosen.
Any future recommendations ?	Continuation of such projects were possible, as it was really beneficial not only for the young people and wildlife on these sites, but it was a great way to educate local site managers and staff, helping them think about small positive changes that they can make to their sites.
10 year maintenance	Quarry/landfill staff have signed a 10 year maintenance agreement in relation to the tree and wildflower planting that happened on their site.
Who involved?	Various Young people Quarry/landfill staff Woodland Trust
Feedback obtained	<p>Limestone Quarry: Lizard habitat management / Scrub Clearance with the Belfast Hills Society on many of the young people who took part were international students. Some anecdotal feedback following this event, was that the students particularly enjoyed it – despite it snowing during the activity. They loved the practical nature of it, and using the tools.</p> <p>Mullaghglass: <i>“Landfill trip was really informative, learned loads and enjoyed it a lot.”</i> Student participating in the UESP April 17</p> <p>Evaluation form feedback following the UESP March 2018</p> <p>Q3. On Tuesday 27th, you were introduced to a number of industrial sites in the Belfast Hills and visited Natural World Products and Mullaghglass Landfill. How would you rate this day? 100% stated they were Very Satisfied.</p> <p><i>“Landfill talk was one of the most eye-opening experiences of my uni studies.”</i></p> <p><i>“I was never really attracted to a job in waste management but after visiting this site I think I will take into account waste management as a potential career pathway. I really enjoyed planting trees because I always wanted to do it as I think Northern Ireland should have more trees growing. I really think tree planting should be promoted widely across Northern Ireland, for example having a volunteering day where many trees are planted. There are so many benefits that come from growing trees!”</i></p> <p><i>“Big eye opener when it comes to work and knowledge, all young people will benefit from such an experience”</i></p> <p><i>“I never really thought about how our rubbish is taken care off when placed in the bins, it was a real eye opener”</i></p>
Publicity	Various Facebook posts Alpha newsletter (Mullaghglass landfill)



Project	1.2 Wildfire project
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott/Patricia Deeney
Aims & objectives	<p>To give young people a greater appreciation of the upland heath habitat along with the plants, animals and birds that are found there, and the impact that wildfires have on this ecosystem. That this appreciation would result in less wildfires being started in the Belfast Hills, improving the biodiversity and aesthetic quality of the sites.</p> <p>Map out all wildfires in the Belfast Hills Area, providing a bigger picture of targeted areas, impact of fires and potential management regimes required.</p> <p>Encourage young people to input into management plans, helping them to improve their local environment.</p> <p>Better site management enabling the spaces to be better used by local communities, in turn improving health and wellbeing.</p>
Outputs	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two young people got involved in tree planting in an area on Carnmoney hill that had been badly damaged by a wildfire, so helping restore the area. 5000m² planted with native trees. • One young person helped map out a wildfire on Cave Hill, recording the damage caused by this malicious fire. • Five young people planned and developed a project looking at vegetation recovery from wildfires in the Belfast Hills. This resulted in the development of an in-depth survey template for looking at vegetation recovery on burn sites. They also part of a John Muir Explorer Award and programme 1.7 young people led suggestions. <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve young people took part in a GIS practical task during the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme. They learnt about the causes and impacts of wildfires in the Belfast Hills and used data to highlight areas at risk of wildfires. They also visited a site on Cave Hill where a wildfire had taken place to see first-hand the effects it has on the environment. • Four young people planned and developed a project looking at vegetation recovery from wildfires in the Belfast Hills, as part of a module for their final year Geography course. This was also part of programme 1.7 young people led suggestions. • Three young people have started a project looking at innovative ways of increasing public awareness of the main issues faced by the Belfast Hills – and this includes wildfires. This project will be finished in 2018 in year 3. • Students undertaking a GIS module with Will Megarry at Queen’s University, used the Belfast Hills as a case study for their work on wildfires. <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten young people took part in a GIS practical task during the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme. They learnt about the causes and impacts of wildfires in the Belfast Hills and used data to highlight areas at risk of wildfires. They also visited a site on Cave Hill where a wildfire had taken place to see first-hand the effects it has on the environment. • Two young people helped map two wildfires on Cave Hill on 12.6.18 and carried out a fire severity survey.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One student undertook a project looking at the impact of wildfires on carbon sequestration and loss in the Belfast Hills, as part of his Environmental Engineering Masters Thesis. This was also part of programme 1.7 young people led suggestions. • Twelve students undertaking the Development Week course with us carried out a fire severity score survey following a wildfire on the Colin Plateau • Three students undertook a project looking at the impact of wildfires on carbon sequestration and loss in the Belfast Hills, as part of their final year geography module called Geography at Work. This was also part of programme 1.7 young people led suggestions. <p>Year 5: Throughout 2020, 10 young people have taken part in GIS training courses, where they learnt about the causes and impacts of wildfires in the Belfast Hills and used data to highlight areas at risk of wildfires. These took place on 25/2/20, 30/9/20 and 8/12/20</p>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people involved now have a much greater appreciation of the damage caused by wildfires and some of the remediation works undertaken to aid recovery. • Health and wellbeing improvement – often long hikes to burn sites. • The information gained from the vegetation survey work will feed into site management plans, improving how the site is managed for both people and wildlife. • Increased employability skills as the young people get the chance to lead their own projects on wildfires, and gain practical experience in GIS and out in the field. One of the young people (Nick) has got a job in the environmental sector and was able to demonstrate their suitability for the post by talking about the work undertaken with BHP. • One of the young people (Noush) went on to become the projects OBF rep, gaining new experiences, confidence and an enhanced CV.
Volunteer time	Dr William Megarry from QUB got involved in the programme
Donations in kind	NA
Any changes?	NA
Any future recommendations?	<p>To include young people more in mapping wildfires if possible, and make use of an increase in man power, to ensure we get around all the wildfires that occur in the Hills. This could be done with a wildfire student group of volunteers. We can hold a training session at the beginning of the year to make sure all participants are completely familiar with the fieldwork methodology. Then when a wildfire occurs, we can send out an open call for volunteers to map the area on a date two weeks later. Available students can sign up online, call to the office for GPS equipment if necessary and then survey the wildfire – mapping its perimeter and assessing the severity.</p> <p>Tried to set up a young volunteers wildfire group as stated above, but couldn't get enough people interested. Perhaps can rethink the marketing strategy and try again.</p>
10 year maintenance	NA
Who involved?	Site managers, QUB students, young people volunteering
Feedback obtained	<p>Yr 2- Students carrying out the wildfire projects as part of their Geo at Work module, wrote a personal reflection on their experience and how being involved will help their employability...</p>

"I have gathered first-hand evidence how to conduct myself in the workplace. In today's world, team is key to running a successful business and being a good employee. Although it may be hard to work as a team at first, I have grasped the concept of how to not only being a team leader, but also a team builder, which is a great "soft" skill to obtain. This experience is excellent, improving self-management and problem solving skills making it easier to work collaboratively and connect with others. Skills have been gained that are indispensable and shall maintain throughout my working life. Placing such skills on my CV should hopefully make me more employable. Indeed employers will look with approval and may well be enthusiastic to see how a potential employee took on the effort to complete work experience while attending university. It is now easier now to apply for a job next year for I have a newly learnt talent such as better communication skills and team building. This may give me a head start over many when looking for the most sought after graduate jobs in my field of study. These skills allow me to make better decisions about future career opportunities and why they are the correct company to work for. Furthermore working with the Belfast Hills Partnership allowed me to become friendly with the workers there. This is the first step to professional networking with organisations which can be beneficial when seeking employment after graduation. Finally work experience breeds various personal attributes relevant to the world beyond university, which can promote geographers to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, to contribute to the wider community, significantly improving the chances of gaining employment. Even more graduates can now bring new innovative ideas that will also bring great value to the company you take up a position with, again increasing the chances of employability."

"Being a future Geography graduate I feel that my employability credentials have been greatly improved because of this module. Geography occupies a distinctive place in the world of learning. It allows one to integrate and analysis the relationship between societies and the physical space in which it operates. Being allocated an investigation enhances both field work and desktop skills. The nature of geography as a discipline and this module means that my skills can be applied to a variety of subject matters from the quantitative sciences to the more interpretative humanities. It provides the chance to express my abstraction and synthesis capabilities in handling large data sets and use hugely advanced GIS techniques in the form of NDVI's. I have displayed the ability to recognise the moral, ethical and safety issues involved in all aspects of geographical enquiry. This module informs future employers of abilities to look at the world broadly at a global perspective level but also abilities to specialise on a task or a prevailing subject matter and use the relevant technological tools to achieve objectives. In carrying out this module I displayed that I can act as a representative of an institution (in this case Queens University) and that I can conduct myself in a professional manner in the work place. Thus, the module has allowed me to thrive in an unfamiliar environment. In participating in this module shows future employees the ability to co-ordinate work with an outside body to achieve a common goal. It requires resourcefulness and responsibility to use and maintain advanced equipment. Not many modules provide their students with a first-hand direct involvement with future employers; it gives you the opportunity not only to sell your academic record but also your personality

allowing you to increase your self-image and credibility. Such a hands on approach provide you with that value experience that is sought after in the work place. This module makes me more appealing to future employers as it shows both abilities to work independently but also as a team. Increasingly today companies are looking for a diversity of thinking to problem solve. Your ability to respect the ideas of others and critically evaluate your work considering your fellow students provides a baseline of your behaviour towards future work colleagues. Undertaking this module communications skills have become one of my most important assets. The constant communications with the Belfast Hills Partnership developed my listening skills to understand and meet the needs of future clients and organisations. I have used this module to articulate my ideas in a way to influence their support. Moreover, my communications skills by way of public presentation greatly enhance employability by showing abilities to thrive under pressure. In todays work place the ability to confidently vocal and visually present your ideas places you at a huge advantage. The ability to capture your and motivate your audience creates a high impression of you in your work. Being a future Geography graduate I feel that my employability credentials have been greatly improved because of this module."

Yr 3-

Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme – Evaluation Form Feedback

"Interesting to learn more about the hills and using gps devices to track wildfire impacts. Then to follow up by using different GIS software which will be advantageous for employment."

"Really enjoyed getting the hands-on experience with GPS and the introduction to QGIS."

"The GPS and GIS surveying was a good way to see how data on wildfires (which are essential to maintaining a healthy hillside) was collected, analysed and used by the conservation campaigns in order to reduce arson on the Belfast hills. Also, working with GIS provided good IT skills working with satellite imagery and the data we collected side-by-side. It was a great day but some of the data analysis took a bit long but I understand that the time needed to be put in was worth it and is what helped me learn GIS a bit more."

"The GPS surveying was amazing and the GPS practical was very good! It was hard at first but by the end I was zooming through the manual, unfortunately I didn't finish it and would love to see the finished map."

Students from Geography at Work module after completing Wildfire and Carbon Sequestration project – evaluation form feedback:

"The aspect of working with an outside employer such as The Belfast Hills especially on the topic of wildfires as it is a current issue. I have gained experience with working with professional employers but also knowledge of wildfires and GIS."

"I believe I developed my communication skills by working with a separate organisation from Queens, this will be of benefit to me in the future world of

	<p><i>work. I felt that going into the field to see the impact of wildfire on the landscape and how the vegetation recovers at different rates was essential in understanding our project, this was certainly beneficial. I also enjoyed learning more about what the Partnership does.”</i></p> <p><i>“After visiting the hills to see the impact of wildfires, I would like to revisit the sites in a few months to see the progress of vegetation recovery. It has also made me more aware of the Hills in general and I would consider walking there more often and reading more about the area.”</i></p> <p><i>“It has opened my eyes more to issues such as young people burning vegetation and the difficulty with reducing the impact humans cause on such environments.”</i></p> <p><i>“It has reinforced how environmental sustainability is so important.”</i></p> <p>Yr 5- GIS Course on 25/2/20 – Evaluation Form Feedback <i>“Excellent course, excellent tutor, a great course for getting up to speed with QGIS”</i></p> <p><i>“Great course, very complete, going through different topics, very well explained and very useful”</i></p> <p><i>“I started with zero knowledge so it was helpful to cover a lot. Extremely helpful with very straightforward step-by-step instructions”</i></p> <p>The most useful aspect of the course – <i>“The practical part, getting the hand on experience is the best method”</i></p> <p><i>“Thorough guided notes useful for looking back on and helpful websites, apps etc.</i></p>
Publicity	Various social media posts





Project	1.3 Farmland/Grassland Habitat Enhancement
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott/Patricia Deeney
Aims & objectives	<p>Transforming farmland/disused land in the Belfast Hills both aesthetically and for wildlife through the manpower provided by young people.</p> <p>To improve the condition of grasslands in the Belfast Hills for the benefit of biodiversity, including the iconic Irish Hare and butterflies such as the dark green fritillary and wood white.</p> <p>Encouraging good practice and building up positive relationships with local landowners</p> <p>Developing positive attitudes and behaviour of young people (and through them their parents, peers etc) relating to their local environment and how it should be looked after</p> <p>Enabling young people to gain practical skills that will enhance their employability.</p>
Outputs	<p>Year 1:</p> <p>Farmland work-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnmoney Hill hedgerow surveys, hedge weeding, hedge planting, hedge laying = 7 young people (contractor also involved so total of 8,500 trees planted) • Upper Hightown hedge weeding = 2 young people <p>Grassland work-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glencairn & legoniel legume survey = 3 young people • Divis butterfly surveys = 6 young people • Colin Glen grassland surveys = 3 young people • Lagmore grassland surveys = 2 young people <p>Year 2:</p> <p>Farmland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge planting on Rockview Farm approx. 550m of hedge – 2 young people • Hedgerow survey in Glencairn – 1 young person <p>Grassland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slievenacloy – Gorse Removal in Slievenacloy – 3 young people Vetch survey in Slievenacloy – 2 young people Wildflower survey in Slievenacloy – 1 young person Moth and Butterfly survey with visitors from Hill Holt – 7 young people • Cave Hill – Gorse Removal in Cave Hill – 1 young person Hedge planting in Ballyaghaghan approx. 625m of hedge – 2 young people Hedge weed and litter pick along Upper Hightown Road approx. 350m – 2 young people Ragwort pull in Ballyaghaghan approx. 7,401m² – 3 young people • Carnmoney Hill – Wildflower meadow raking on Carnmoney Hill – 1 young person Wildflower survey on Carnmoney Hill – 3 young people • Black Mountain – Purple moor grass & rush pasture survey on Black Mountain – 2 young people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Plateau – Cryptic woodwhite survey on Colin Plateau – 1 young person • Glencairn – Cryptic woodwhite survey in Glencairn – 2 young people • Student led projects: Devil’s bit scabious and marsh fritillary project, including surveys in the grassland surrounding McQuillan’s Whitehill Quarry – 1 young person Project to help streamline our environmental surveys particularly grassland surveys – 1 young person. <p>Year 3:</p> <p>Farmland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge planted on Sam Marks farm by Belfast Hills Society 60m - 9 young people • Maintenance/Weeding newly planted hedge (that was partly planted by young people in February) carried out by young people on Development Week Course and other young volunteers, 240m – 15 young people <p>Grassland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willow weave fence around a pond on Carnmoney Hill 22m – 4 young people • Colin Glen/Plateau Litter Pick along 433m of pathway – one young person • Hedge planted at Slievenacloy by Belfast Hills Society 58m – 16 young people • Wildflower seeds sown in Carnmoney Hill 16.6m² area – 2 young people • Cave Hill Gorse Removal 460m² - 1 young person • Slievenacloy Rush Raking 1402m² - 1 young person • Litter pick Ligoniel /path maintenance 24,700m² - 3 young people • Student led projects: Completion of Devil’s bit scabious and marsh fritillary project, including surveys in the grassland surrounding McQuillan’s Whitehill Quarry – 1 young person. • Conservation Grazing walk and talk at Slievenacloy for the students undertaking the Development Week course by Judy and Michael Meharg – 16 young people (13 students, James, Sam and another student joined us from QUB) • GPS survey training at Slievenacloy – including mapping paths and other site assets for the site manager – for the students undertaking the Development Week course – 14 students. • Trainee Rangers joined up with Ulster Wildlife reserves team to carry out some rush raking (2.849m²) and gorse clearance (234m²) at Slievenacloy - 6 young people. A further 287m² area of gorse was cleared at Slievenacloy by volunteers on various dates– 3 young people • Some young people from People 1st carried out a litter pick at Ligoniel along with some path maintenance – 11 young people • A 25m² wildflower meadow was sown in the grounds of Holy Cross Primary School with students from the Belfast Hills Society – 8 young people
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Trainee Rangers undertook Lantra accredited strimmer training, and strimmed a 640m grass verge on Divis Mtn during their assessment – over three Friday’s • 4 of the Trainee Rangers strimmed a 97m² wildflower meadow in CBS <p>Year 4: Farmland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree and hedge plating – 2 occasions, 8 young people total <p>Grassland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildflower planting – 20m², 2 occasions, 4 young people • Litter lifts, 3 occasions, 6 young people • Rath clearance, 3 occasions, 1 young person <p>Year 5: Farmland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedge planted on Sam Marks farm on various dates – 20.7m – 1 young person <p>Grassland work –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slievenacloy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ragwort pulled - 334m² – 1 young person - Ragwort pulled – 15,603m² – 2 young people - Gorse clearance – 4.6m² – 2 young people - Gorse clearance – 436m² – 3 young people - Alder clearance from hedgerow – 7.41m – 2 young people - Alder clearance from hedgerow – 106m – 3 young people • Ballyaghagan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gorse clearance – 8.29m² – 1 young person • BHP Office & Tree nursery wildflower areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Trainee Rangers undertook Lantra accredited strimmer training, and strimmed 31.91m² of wildflower beds
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Up-skilling of young people involved, giving them practical experience which will help with employability. Increased confidence in their own ability to undertake a range of practical surveys and conservation tasks, as well as ability to communicate well and work as a team. Improved grassland and farmland habitats across the Belfast Hills in terms of biodiversity.</p> <p>Year 1: Four of these young folk have been back in touch to say they have got a job, three of which was related to the green economy.</p> <p>Year 2: As well as the outcomes already listed, one young person increased his confidence and public speaking skills, as he led a moth and butterfly survey session for six other young people.</p> <p>Year 3: As well as the outcomes already listed, one young person got back in touch after being involved in volunteer/society tasks in the past, in order to plant a wildflower meadow in Carnmoney Hill. She had gone on to work on a Grow</p>

	<p>Wild project, and had some seeds leftover, and then thought of us as a location to plant them.</p> <p>14 young people received a lantra accreditation in the use of strimmers and brushcutters.</p> <p>Year 4: 12 young people received a lantra accreditation in the use of strimmers and brushcutters.</p> <p>Year 5: 4 young people received a lantra accreditation in the use of strimmers and brushcutters.</p>
Volunteer time	<p>Year 1: 7 days of free training support provided by Judy Meharg</p> <p>Year 2: Rosie from Woodland Trust provided support and training for the meadow raking in Carnmoney Hill. Judy Meharg and Geoff Newell provided support for the environmental surveys.</p> <p>Year 3: Judy and Michael Meharg led a Conservation Grazing Walk & Talk in Slievenacloy for the students undertaking the Development Week John Muir Award Rosie from Woodland Trust talked to group about willow fence construction</p>
Donations in kind	Trees from the Woodland Trust (WT) along with contractor support
Any changes?	<p>Year 1: We were scheduled to undertake a large amount of tree planting at a farmers ground (Sam Marks) in year 1 with the help of young people under the guidance of our YDO using trees supplied by the WT. Our YDO got a job with the WT, leaving us without the required staff during the tree planting season. As a result of this rather unusual circumstance the WT paid for a contract to plant 6500 trees, while we planted 2000. So although the farmer received all the agreed amount of planted hedge with wasn't done entirely using young people as planned.</p> <p>Year 2: We had planned to work with the young farmers group present in the Belfast Hills, called Lylehill. Sadly, making worthwhile contact has proven difficult. Ulster Wildlife are also hoping to work with this group in 2018, and it is hoped that by working together, we may be able to make some progress and involve the young farmers in our work in the Hills.</p> <p>Year 3: We had planned to work with the young farmers group present in the Belfast Hills, called Lylehill. Sadly, even with the involvement of Ulster Wildlife we still haven't been able to make any headway.</p> <p>We had planned to run a series of fence laying training courses for a local agricultural college, but due to a series of unforeseen circumstances which were beyond our control, these had to be cancelled.</p>

Any future recommendations?	Focus on involving local young people with a real interest in the environment as opposed to spending a lot of time and energy trying to recruit young farmers groups. Still take any opportunity that arises as you never know! Keep learning sessions as activity based as possible.
10 year maintenance	Landowners have signed up to a 10 year maintenance agreement for any of the physical improvements works undertaken on their land.
Who involved?	Local farmers & landowners Woodland Trust Young people
Feedback obtained	<i>“Being involved in farmland and grassland projects has given me an opportunity to help enhance my local environment for biodiversity while learning new skills in surveying and practical conservation.”</i> James Thompson, July 18 Development week participants wrote the following, May 18: <i>“The trek around Slievenacloy was very fun and helped us to get to know each other better.”</i> <i>“The GPS surveying was useful as it is such an upcoming thing, so I really enjoyed this and the walk around Slievenacloy. However, the second part of the day consisted of us just listening and therefore I did not benefit as much as I would of if we had an activity to do based on what we had learnt, as this would have enabled me to learn and remember the information better.”</i> <i>“Very much enjoyed it”</i>
Publicity	Social media posts.





Project	1.4 Invasive Species
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott/Patricia Deeney
Aims & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people educated about the problem of invasive species in their local environment and opportunities given for them to undertake practical management steps to manage such species. • Young people trained in recognition and reporting of invasives and encouraged to report sightings elsewhere. • Japanese knotweed and Himalayan Balsam mapped and managed at a minimum of four sites. Other invasive species noted and where possible also managed. • Site's invasive species minimised allowing native plants, insects etc to recolonise making a significant positive impact on the natural environment.
Outputs	<p>Year 1: NA</p> <p>Year 2: Invasive species removal -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cave Hill (laurel) – 7 young people (soc) • Forth River (Himalayan balsam) – 6 young people (streetbeat) • Throne Wood (laurel, pheasant berry, snowberry, fuschia removed) – 5 young people • Carnmoney Hill (pheasant berry & laurel) – 1 young person • Lyons Park (balsam bash) – 1 young person <p>Invasive species survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Glen (laurel) – 19 young people (soc) • Cave Hill (laurel) – 11 young people (citi) <p>Sorting invasive GIS data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 young person during a week long placement <p>Three young people have started a project looking at innovative ways of increasing public awareness of the main issues faced by the Belfast Hills – and this includes invasive species. This project will be finished in 2018 in year 3.</p> <p>Year 3:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three students finished a project looking at innovative ways of increasing public awareness of the main issues faced by the Belfast Hills – including invasive species. • Organised a Himalayan Balsam pull for Glencairn/Forthriver on Friday 6th July, but sadly no one signed up to help. • Three young people helped mapped invasive species found in Colin Glen • Laurel removed from Colin Glen – 560m² with 4 young people on 12.4.18; and another 17m² with 13 young people from People 1st on 2.10.18 • Himalayan Balsam removed from Upper Colin Glen – 358m² with 2 young people • Heliotrope removed from Throne Wood – 113m with 2 young people • Pheasant berry removed from Carnmoney Hill – 464m² on various dates with 1 young person <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorse removal slievenacloy – 1 young person • Laurel clearance Glencairn, 3 occasions, 6 young people • Balsam removal Colin Glen, 3 occasions, 3 young people • Pheasantberry Carnmoney, once, 2 young people • Brambles, Valley park, once, 1 young person <p>Year 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laurel removed from Glencairn on four occasions - 2 young people – 7.23m² - Belfast Hills Society - 7 young people – 44.9m² - Belfast Hills Society - 7 young people - 109m² - Environmental Skills Programme - 6 young people – 1,069m² • Winter heliotrope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Winter heliotrope cleared along path from Carnmoney Hill, 4 young people – 41.3m - Winter heliotrope cleared from Throne Wood, 1 young person – 21.52m² • Snowberry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snowberry cleared from Belshaws Quarry, 1 young person – 5.36m² - Snowberry cleared from Belshaws Quarry, 2 young people – 17.3m² • Himalayan Balsam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Himalayan balsam cleared from Glenside, 1 young person – 172m² - Himalayan balsam cleared from Cave Hill, 2 young people – 734m²
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved habitats across the Belfast Hills as a number of invasive species are removed. • Young people involved now have a much greater appreciation of the impacts caused by invasive species and some of the remediation works undertaken to minimise their spread.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and wellbeing improvement – often long hikes to survey areas for invasive species. • The information gained from the many surveys will feed into site management plans, improving how the site is managed for both people and wildlife, and helping BHP and site managers tackle the ongoing issue of invasive species.
Volunteer time	Judy Meharg provided support and training in surveying and removing invasive species. Judy also came along to a number of events to paint herbicide on stumps of invasive species cut down by the young people to prevent any regrowth.
Donations in kind	NA
Any changes?	YDO trained in herbicide/pesticide use so that they can paint stumps etc themselves as opposed to depending on the availability of others (training scheduled 2021).
Any future recommendations?	Herbicide/pesticide training quite expensive, but would be a great skill for young people to add to their CV – consider factoring in the costs of such in future funding applications.
10 year maintenance	Landowners have signed up to a 10 year maintenance agreement for any of the physical improvements works undertaken on their land.
Who involved?	Site managers Young people
Feedback obtained	<p><i>“Learning how to identify and control invasive species within the hills has provided me with invaluable ID and land management skills for following a career in environmental conservation.”</i> James Thompson</p> <p><i>“Doing the invasive species activities built a great foundation for what to look out for and gave me an insight into overcoming a very prominent issue in many environments today.”</i> Annoushka Bayat</p>
Publicity	Social media posts.





Project	1.5 Digging Archaeology Archaeology Dig, training, talks etc at Slievenacloy 2016
Officer responsible for monitoring	Lizzy Pinkerton
Aims & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire young people to become passionate about their local heritage. • Encourage young people to explore and discover the rich history on their doorstep. • Empower young people to develop new skills relevant to developing their future careers, volunteering and contributing towards the green economy. • Encourage young people, residents and local communities to value and protect their built heritage and cultural environment. • Bring the past to life through archaeology and creative engagement.
Outputs	<p>The dig was held over a four week period, and during this time students from QUB undertook practical field archaeology, focusing on excavating remains of a dwelling and part of the ditch. QUB students - 16 (daily)</p> <p>In relation to the dig various flints and pieces of pottery were uncovered. In the trench in the centre of the site lots of Neolithic flint was excavated by the young people, including a beautiful Neolithic scraper. Pieces of Neolithic pottery were also excavated and the possible foundation of Neolithic huts. In the trench, with the early medieval dwelling, we uncovered a Neolithic porcellanite axe, which may have been used as a 'thunder bolt' in Early Medieval times.</p>
Outcomes	<p>The feedback obtained from the young people shows that the dig did enhance the students understanding of the rich history and heritage of the area, giving them practical first-hand experience for the first time. For many of the young people this confirmed their choice of career direction, as well as enhancing their CV significantly.</p> <p>N.B. Programme 2.1 looks more at the wider community outcomes from the archaeology dig.</p>
Volunteer time	<p>Most of the man power for the dig was provided by 16 archaeology students from QUB over four weeks = 320 volunteer days We also had a volunteer who assisted with the school outreach sessions and led dig sessions for the schools of the dig this came to a total of 23 days.</p>
Donations in kind	Colm Donnelly, head of CAF with QUB provided inkind support to the value of £13,000 organising and co-ordinating the archaeology dig.
Any changes?	No -the student involvement in the dig ran very much according to plan.
Any future recommendations?	We have completed two concurrent excavations at Slievenacloy, which have been produced excellent archaeological finds, however we believe that it will be exciting to excavate another site in the Belfast Hills and might encourage groups to book again.
Who involved?	<p>Belfast Hills Partnership Ulster Wildlife NIEA Built Heritage QUB Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork Volunteers Local Schools Community groups General public</p>
Feedback obtained	Feedback was obtained via official evaluation sheet filled in by the course tutor on behalf of the students. Feedback included:

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Increased confidence</td> <td>Yes (the confidence of many students seemed to strengthen through the project)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Increased self esteem</td> <td>Yes (difficult to quantify but I believe that most students found that the challenges and camaraderie of the dig made them feel good about themselves)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Increased wellbeing</td> <td>Yes (I think most students found the project very rewarding)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project management</td> <td>Yes (in that the students got to observe the steps needed to bring a large project to completion)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public speaking</td> <td>Yes (speaking to school children)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vocational skills</td> <td>Yes (excavation techniques and analytical thinking)</td> </tr> </table> <p>“This was a rewarding project. Archaeological excavation is an almost unique mix of the physical and the cerebral and it stretched the students in both respects. As the project progressed it was noticeable how many of the students became not just more used to the physical aspects of the project but also began to look at the evidence revealed, assess it, think about the sequence of deposition and its significance. The project was rewarding for the students on several different levels and is one which I think many will continue to find benefit in the future.” C McSparron QUB lecturer</p>	Increased confidence	Yes (the confidence of many students seemed to strengthen through the project)	Increased self esteem	Yes (difficult to quantify but I believe that most students found that the challenges and camaraderie of the dig made them feel good about themselves)	Increased wellbeing	Yes (I think most students found the project very rewarding)	Project management	Yes (in that the students got to observe the steps needed to bring a large project to completion)	Public speaking	Yes (speaking to school children)	Vocational skills	Yes (excavation techniques and analytical thinking)
Increased confidence	Yes (the confidence of many students seemed to strengthen through the project)												
Increased self esteem	Yes (difficult to quantify but I believe that most students found that the challenges and camaraderie of the dig made them feel good about themselves)												
Increased wellbeing	Yes (I think most students found the project very rewarding)												
Project management	Yes (in that the students got to observe the steps needed to bring a large project to completion)												
Public speaking	Yes (speaking to school children)												
Vocational skills	Yes (excavation techniques and analytical thinking)												
Publicity	<p>Newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish News ▪ North Belfast News ▪ Andersonstown News <p>Radio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BBC: Your place and mine <p>Websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BHP facebook page & website ▪ BBC things to do website ▪ Visit Belfast website ▪ Ulster Wildlife website ▪ Outdoor NI website ▪ NI Archaeology Forum 												



Project	1.6 Training Courses
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott/Patricia Deeney/ John McLaughlin
Aims & objectives	<p>To introduce young people to the Belfast Hills, conservation and to develop both classroom and practical techniques in environmental management and/or promotion.</p> <p>That young people are trained in a range of skills.</p> <p>An aim of offering free training courses is that the young people who attend the courses will then become involved in the wide variety of other programmes available in the Belfast Hills.</p>
Outputs	<p>Year 1: 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butterfly & legume training • Grasslands habitat survey training • Ash woodland training • Frog orchid survey training • Seed collection training • Ash woodland training • Riverfly survey training • Bat survey training • One John Muir award was undertaken <p>17 young people attended training courses. 6 young people obtained their John Muir Award.</p> <p>Year 2: 2017</p> <p>Around 74 young people attended training courses. 33 of these young people obtained their John Muir Award; and 9 young people put forward for Millennium Volunteers certificates.</p> <p>OBF Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPS and GIS Training – 33 young people (12x UESP, 10x geo at work, 5x individual vols, 6x society members) • Bumblebee ID and Survey training – 8 young people • Outdoor Learning – 13 young people (9 from UU, 4 Edmund Rice student group) • Riverfly ID and Survey training – 6 young people (3 Colin Glen Get into Outdoors, 3 geo at work) • Fieldwork techniques – 12 young people (UESP) • Charcoal making – 8 young people (Belfast Hills Society) • Practical conservation e.g. tree planting, wildflower meadow sowing, invasive species removal throughout the year at various events/tasks. <p>John Muir Awards: 33 young people</p> <p>Discovery (4 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Glen ‘Get into Outdoors’ – 4 young people (3 got award) • UESP – 10 young people (11 in total got awards) • Development Week – 4 young people (3 got awards) • NRC Prince’s Trust – 8 young people (5 got awards) • People 1st – 12 young people (7 got awards) <p>Explorer (8 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 young people awarded so far in 2017 • 2 young people still in the process of their award

Other training that our OBF young people have attended with the Belfast Hills...

- Ancient Woodland Training and Survey – 2 young people
- Newt Training – 3 young people
- Bat Training – 1 young person
- Bird ringing – 3 young people

Year 3: 2018

Around 170 different young people attended training courses. 30 of these young people obtained their John Muir Award (either Discovery or Explorer); and 6 young people received Millennium Volunteers certificates (either 50, 100 or 200 hour).

OBF Training:

- GPS and GIS Training (47 different young people)
- Creating EFS dataset – 2 young people
- Sorting BHP GIS data – 1 young person
- UESP – 11 young people
- Development Week – 13 young people
- General GPS training – Carnmoney Hill Path surveys (2 young people); Cave Hill Path Surveys (7 young people from Citi); Geocaching in Colin Glen (2 young people); Wildfire Mapping in Cave Hill (2 young people); Gorse mapping on Cave Hill (3 young people); Wildfire GPS data on Cave Hill (3 young people)
- Trainee Rangers - 12 young people

- Intro to Bird ID and Calls by Dot Blakely – with the Belfast Hills Society 8 young people
- Outdoor Learning – 44 different young people (9 from UU, 11 taking part in the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme, 13 during the Development Week Course, 14 Trainee Rangers)
- Riverfly ID and Survey training – 43 different young people (11 taking part in the Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme, 13 during the Development Week Course, 12 Trainee Rangers, 10 students from SERC)
- Fieldwork techniques – 80 different young people (11 young people from UESP, 13 during Dev week, 46 students from SERC woodland ecology and 10 students from SERC Freshwater)
- Bumblebee ID Training – 13 during the Development Week Course
- Hedgerow Survey Training - 13 during the Development Week Course
- Nature Photography – 28 young people (20 young people from workshop planned by Society committee, and 8 young people on another course that took place on 8.8.18)
- Employability Training – 24 young people (10 students from QUB on 5.12.18 (2 of those young people returning for mock interviews) and 14 Trainee Rangers on 21.12.18)
- Practical conservation e.g. tree/hedge planting, invasive species surveying & removal throughout the year at various events/tasks.

John Muir Awards: 30 young people

Discovery (4 days)

- UESP – 11 young people (13 in total got awards)

- Development Week – 12 young people
- People 1st – 3 young people
- 1 young person who had to leave the Trainee Ranger scheme early Explorer (8 days)

- 3 young people awarded in 2018 due to student projects
- (14 Trainee Rangers in the process of completing their Explorer Award, due to receive it in January 2019)

Millennium Volunteer Certificates: 6 young people

- 50 hour – 2 young people
- 100 hour – 2 young people
- 200 hour – 2 young people

Other training that our OBF young people have attended with the Belfast Hills:

- Badger Survey Training – 2
- Ancient Woodland Training and Survey – 1
- Bumblebee & Solitary Bee Training – 2
- Pond plant & Invasive Pond Plant ID Training – 1

Year 4: 2019

Around 60 young people attended training courses (Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme, QUB Development Week, BHP Trainee Ranger Scheme, Youth Link). 54 of these young people obtained their John Muir Award and 15 young people (TR's) received Millennium Volunteers certificates.

OBF Training:

- Practical conservation e.g. invasive species control (45YP)
- Bumblebee ID and Survey training (15YP)
- Moth-trapping and Survey training (15YP)
- Bird-Ringing and Survey Training (15YP)
- Hedgerow and Invertebrate Survey Training (15YP)
- Waste Management in the Hills Training (30YP)
- Countryside Access Management Training (30YP)
- Riverfly ID and Survey training (45YP)
- Outdoor Learning Skills YP(45YP)
- Bushcraft & Charcoal Making (15YP)
- Employability Skills Training (30YP)

Trainee Rangers: (15YP)

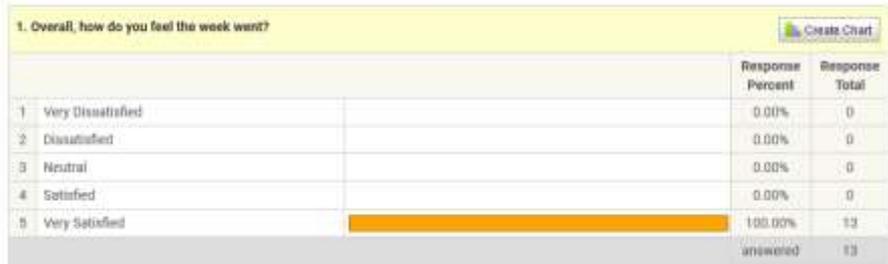
- Brushcutter and Strimmer Training (LANTRA)
- Hiking / Geocaching / Orienteering
- GPS / GIS Training
- Invasive Species Mapping
- Tree seed propagation / Wildflower Sowing
- Habitat Management / Scrub / Coppicing
- Access Maintenance / Pathworks
- Outdoor Learning Training
- Delivering Outdoor Learning to Primary Schools

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability and Interview Skills Training <p>John Muir Awards: 54 Young People</p> <p>Discovery (4 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UESP – 13YP • Development Week – 13YP • Youth Link – 13YP <p>Explorer (8 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainee Rangers – 15 YP <p>Year 5: 2020 Around 93 young people attended training courses in total (Trainee Rangers, Environmental Skills Programme, QUB Geo at Work, Lough Neagh Partnership etc.) 9 of these young people obtained their John Muir Explorer Award and 12 young people received Millennium Volunteers certificates (3 x 50hr; 8 x 100hr; 1 x 200hr) and 14 young people got a Lantra accreditation in the use of strimmers and brushcutters (TR's from 2019 – 20 & TRS from 20 – 21)</p> <p>OBF Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical conservation e.g. invasive species control, tree planting, weeding etc. (49YP) • Bird-Ringing and Survey Training (11YP) • Riverfly ID and Survey training (4YP) • Outdoor Learning Skills YP(9YP) • Employability Skills Training (80YP) • GPS / GIS Training (25YP) • Brushcutter and Strimmer Training (LANTRA) (14YP) • Ash survey training (9YP) • Site heritage survey training (12YP) • Risk assessment training (12YP)
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Upskilling of the young people. All training courses were combined with a practical 'doing' session. A number of the young people were uni students who although had a lot of theoretical knowledge of biological systems had no actual experience of practical survey work or conservation tasks, this provided them with vital real life experience helping them secure employment in the green economy.</p> <p>Year 1: It has been observed that one of the young people was particularly shy and didn't interact much with the group – as the year progressed his social confidence has improved and he is communicating much better with others – an essential life skill.</p> <p>Year 2: A number of the young people have attended one of our training courses or events, and liked it so much that they then stay on to volunteer longer term.</p> <p>A number of our young people are so inspired by the first level of the John Muir Award, that they are keen to return and take part in the second level.</p>

	<p>Year 3: The young people taking part in our training courses also gain an appreciation that they're learning skills important for their future employment, as well as getting a chance to network This was particularly evident in the feedback we received following the UESP.</p> <p>By attending our training courses, the young people are not only increasing their knowledge and experience on a variety of biodiversity topics, they are also getting the chance to meet like-minded individuals and potentially new friends for life. As well as the feedback below, some of the young people we've worked with since they attended our training courses, have told us that they have stayed in touch with people they met on the training courses and then met up socially at other times (Joy and Andrew from UESP). Even students from the same university said that they had seen each other around their campus, but because they were in different years/courses they hadn't spoken, but since the training courses they would stop to chat and have even looked over each other's dissertations (Sophia and Brynn).</p> <p>Year 4:</p> <p>Some of the young people on the UESP and Development Week Programmes have registered to volunteer with The Belfast Hills Partnership in future and have expressed an interest in gaining a higher level John Muir Award as well as a Millennium Volunteers Certificate.</p> <p>Others from Youth Link said they didn't realise how much wildlife and interesting walks were right at their doorstep and said they would definitely explore their own hills more often and use new skills that they have learned.</p> <p>One Trainee Ranger moved on to the UW year-long traineeship</p> <p>Based on a reference from the Youth Development Officer one Trainee Ranger was accepted for a placement at Camp America.</p> <p>Year 5: Due to the covid-19 pandemic, our face to face activities had to stop, which sadly meant some of our numbers were down on what they had been previously. We had to think of different ways of working with young people, and move online. One of our sessions that translated well to online delivery, was our environmental employability workshop. This has led to an increase in young people taking part in this training.</p>
<p>Donations in kind</p>	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Meharg provided free training support – in year one this was worth £1350 <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumblebee training £75 Geoff Newall • Judy Meharg provided free training support – in year two this was worth £257.16 • Charcoal making workshop from Tree Charter Artist Christine Mackey £300 <p>Year 3: In kind support totalling £1,660.78</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormac Hamill CHCC provided walks/talks to UESP and Trainee Rangers worth £85.73 • Dermot McCann provided a talk to UESP worth £10.72 • Gary Flaherty provided a tour/talk to UESP worth £53.58 • Geoff Newall provided Bumblebee training to Dev Week students worth £75 • Jim Bradley provided a tour of local community projects and employability workshops worth £460.72 • John Fisher provided a tour of Belfast Zoo worth £58.58 • Judy Meharg provided walk/talk on conservation grazing worth £32.15 • Michael George explained practical tasks in Colin Allotments worth £225 • Michael Meharg provided walk/talk on conservation grazing worth £32.15 • Patrick Kelly provided a talk/tour of NWP worth £150 • The Ulster Wildlife Reserves Team provided a day of tasks in Slievenacloy worth £150 • Rosie Irwin provided a talk to UESP worth £10.72 • Shiela Lyons provided a talk to Trainee Rangers worth £21.43 <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Bradley (BHP) gave 2 x Introduction to Belfast Hills talk worth £42.86 • Cormac Hamill (CHCC) provided 2 x guided tour & Countryside Access talk worth £85.72 • Gordon Gault (Bryson Recycling) - 2 x Tour of Bryson Recycling plant worth £42.86 • Gary Flaherty (Mullaghglass Landfill) -Tour of landfill site worth £85.72 • Craig Somerville (National Trust) - Talk about Management of Divis Mountain worth £10.72 • Andy Crory (Ulster Wildlife) - Moth Trapping training and Talk about Slievenacloy NR worth £85.72 <p>Year 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Meharg (BHP) delivered ash survey training worth £75. She also delivered practical conservation tasks worth £492.86 • Ryan Boyle (CL) provided Lizard survey training worth £150
Any changes?	NA
Any future recommendations?	Update the 'share' element of the John Muir Award for NEET groups. There is a need to make it more palatable to them, as attendance drops on this day of the award scheme. Going forward, it may be best to incorporate the share element as much as possible into the outdoor days, and then have an hour or two as share or celebration event, where we play a film of their experience and perhaps display each participant's favourite photo which is printed.
10 year maintenance	Trained volunteers will be used by BHP beyond OBF to provide records of species etc within the Belfast Hills. We are hopeful that the training provided will inspire young people to learn more about biological surveying etc, leading them to study this further and potentially result in them undertaking a career in the environmental sector.
Who involved?	Colin Glen Trust

	Princes Trust QUB Northern Regional College Ulster University People 1 st South Eastern Regional College
Feedback obtained	<p>The young people have been particularly positive about the training received, appreciating its monetary value, and the difference it makes to their CV.</p> <p>Year 2:</p> <p><i>“It has expanded my knowledge base on the environment from my current Geography degree and general interest in the environment...currently applying for some conservation work during the summer months in Iceland”</i> Development Week Course participant year 2</p> <p>They have also noted that the training sessions have raised their awareness of the Belfast Hills and will be more likely to visit them in the future...</p> <p><i>“It has opened my eyes to the amount of wildlife living around us. I will repeat visits to different sites around Belfast Hills and get friends into geocaching.”</i> Prince’s Trust Colin Glen ‘Get into Outdoor’s’ course participant, Discovery Award</p> <p><i>“I have always had a great respect for the environment but learning more about bees in particular opened my eyes to how much the environment needs help. I plan to do some volunteering and do the next level of my John Muir Award.”</i> Prince’s Trust Colin Glen ‘Get into Outdoor’s’ course participant, Discovery Award</p> <p>Other training participants just liked getting close to nature... <i>“Skills in outdoor learning will no doubt be useful to me in the future, I’m really glad for this part of the course in particular. It was a really wholesome experience for me, I loved how close to nature we were, and I’ll never forget those simple, yet informative games!”</i> Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme participant, just after the Outdoor Learning element</p> <p>A number of the young people have attended one of our training courses or events, and liked it so much that they then stay on to volunteer longer term. One young person said <i>“Once I took part in the tree planting I felt like I was extremely welcome by everyone and from then I really looked forward to every event that I could make it too. Similarly I felt that the skills I acquired and improved on the activities were also great as we were often accompanied by experts in the fields of GIS like Patricia and also species like Geoff.”</i> Nathan</p> <p>A number of our young people are so inspired by the first level of the John Muir Award, that they are keen to return and take part in the second level... <i>“I learnt that there are so many wildlife that I hadn’t heard of. That it takes a lot of dedicated people, like the people of the Belfast Hills and volunteers to keep the environment and our local area clean. It taught me that I should be more aware of small wildlife and that littering can affect even the smallest of animals. I now would like to complete the ‘Explorer’ John Muir Award and also volunteer at the Belfast Hills”</i> Prince’s Trust Colin Glen ‘Get into Outdoor’s’ course participant, Discovery Award</p> <p>Year 3:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Undergraduate Environmental Skills Programme 2018</p>



Quotes from UESP 2018 participants following the GPS/GIS element of the training course:
“Interesting to learn more about the hills and using gps devices to track wildfire impacts. Then to follow up by using different GIS software which will be advantageous for employment.”

“Beautiful views and very interesting talk on cultural, natural and archaeological features on Cavehill! Was brilliant learning how to use QGIS as haven’t had this opportunity in Uni! Only improvement would be a bit more GPS work on hills, although I understand this may be difficult due to time constraints.”

“The GPS surveying was amazing and the GPS practical was very good! it was hard at first but by the end I was zooming through the manual, unfortunately I didn't finish is and would to love to see the finished map.”

Quotes from UESP 2018 participants following the Outdoor Learning element of the training course:

“A great day to bring us all together and get comfortable, the hike was great and now we are able to see what basic things we need to look at when considering teaching kids outdoors, making the film was awesome”

“Really enjoyed Patricia's learning techniques for kids and how I could apply it to future work”

“Various educational methods for engaging kids with the environment was very well delivered! I took a lot away from this exercise. The video was brilliant for reflection upon the week and brought the group even closer together!”

Quotes from UESP 2018 participants “Overall, what did you find most beneficial from completing this John Muir Award programme?”

“Getting to use a range of different ways to find out about the environment the surveys, gaining more experience with using GIS and using GPS surveying especially (as I have never done it before), also to see how each professional person we talked too, how they got to be in the job they are not in (very interesting! & reassuring that it is possible to get a job that I will enjoy)”

*“Extremely helpful to find out the many different paths that can be taken to get a career in the environmental sector.
 Volunteering is key for learning new skills and helping your community”*

“Too hard to tell as everything was great, I learned so much more from this than I did in uni, made great contacts”

“As a student looking to the future for employment, I feel the knowledge gained from the hills' species to GIS to networking all will benefit me when it comes to communicating with future employers and people interested in this field.”

“Great contacts. Nice to have more avenues into volunteering”

“The John Muir award programme has been amazing for introducing a holistic approach to explore, and understand biodiversity! It has introduced us to new people in the environmental field and the information given throughout the programme has been extremely beneficial!”

“Firstly meeting new people with similar interest areas along with expanding and building upon knowledge of the environment and how society interacts together.”



Quotes from UESP 2018 participants “Feel free to add any other comments you would like to make:”

“The Belfast hills staff were very welcoming and informative. I honestly couldn’t have asked for anyone better than Patricia to take the course. Her enthusiasm was infectious and I could ask her anything and she would know the answer or find out for me. I am very thankful that I got to take part in this course I am now so much more clear on what I want to do and what I need to do to get there. “

“A huge thanks to Patricia! She defo made the training course special and fun! It was quite scary being in a room with 12 other people I don't know, she also made sure I was ok when we were out, ensuring I wasn't in pain or over working myself.”

“I felt it was really beneficial for me for choosing my potential career pathway and it was really good to meet other students who would like to work in the environmental sector. I am really glad I took part on the programme as I feel my self-esteem has increased. It is really a unique programme :) Thank you very much!”

“This week has been a fantastic experience, and I will definitely be promoting this course to others in the future! I have a new appreciation for conservation and biodiversity, not only in the Belfast Hills but in general! I have come away with a more holistic view on the environment and how we can protect, conserve and encourage biodiversity, as well as inspiring others as I have been inspired myself! The experiences I have had this week have been amazing! All the staff at the Belfast Hills were fantastic and Patricia delivered the course amazingly well!”

In the Question asked to UESP 2018 participants “Will you undertake any further activities as a result of taking part in this internship? e.g. follow up learning, repeat visits to the Hills, volunteering, presentations etc” 100% of respondents said yes, with most indicating they planned to do some volunteer work.

Other UESP feedback

“Interesting to learn more about the hills and using gps devices to track wildfire impacts. Then to follow up by using different GIS software which will be advantageous for employment.”

“As a student looking to the future for employment, I feel the knowledge gained from the hills' species to GIS to networking all will benefit me when it comes to communicating with future employers and people interested in this field.”

“The video was brilliant for reflection upon the week and brought the group even closer together!”

“A great day to bring us all together and get comfortable.”

“Firstly meeting new people with similar interest areas along with expanding and building upon knowledge of the environment and how society interacts together.”

Development Week 2018

Quote from Development Week 2018 participant following the bumblebee ID element of the training course:

"Learning how to identify bees was very informative and interesting and gave me a better appreciation of the sheer number of species in the local area."

Quotes from Development Week 2018 participant following the Outdoor Learning element of the training course:

"Felt it was a good event to hold at the end of the week and rounded off a great week. Events were yet again informative, contemplative towards myself and strengthened friendships made."

"This was a very relaxed day to end the week. The activities that Patricia done with us were very useful as I can see myself sharing these with others in the future. It was cool to make our own charcoal and then to draw with it, I will definitely do this again. It was nice to end the week by sharing with the rest of the group and hearing their feedback."

Quotes from Development Week 2018 participants "Overall, what did you find most beneficial from completing this John Muir Award programme?"

"Learning about what volunteers do and how important it is, so that I can possibly contribute in the same way in the future."

"We got to do so many different activities and it was such a varied week. I benefitted so much by actually going out and doing what we had learnt, as this makes it easier to understand and remember. I definitely feel like I have learnt so much from this week!"

"The experience and connections we made!"

"Employment skills:

- using GIS/GPS.*
- interacting with young people on an educational level and learning how to teach them affectively.*
- freshwater ecology - introducing us to water quality indicators and how to take accurate samples.*
- learning about local hedgerow species in Northern Ireland- a beginners knowledge that will prove useful for the future."*

"I found it really provided me with a good insight into the varied and interesting roles carried out in the environment sector"

"Learning about different species of plants and invertebrates. Can't help but notice them when I'm out now."

"Learning more about the environment and the kind of jobs you can do in this sector and seeing the work that goes into protecting the hills"

In the Question asked to Development Week 2018 participants "Will you undertake any further activities as a result of taking part in this internship? e.g. follow up learning, repeat visits to the Hills, volunteering, presentations etc" 100% of respondents said yes, with most indicating they planned to do some volunteer work.

PGCE Outdoor Learning with UU

Quote from participant following PGCE Outdoor Learning Course with UU *"Great day – my favourite of the PGCE course!"*

Quote from Stephen Roulston (Course Director PGCE Geography) following PGCE Outdoor Learning Course with UU *"it was easily the best session that these student teachers have had. The activities were expertly tailored to their needs. I have no doubt that many of the ideas demonstrated will make their way into the repertoire of these young teachers, and that they will take them forward into their teaching careers. The very appropriate incorporation of technology into many of the activities was particularly impressive for me as I have had a*

career-long interest in embedding technologies into Geography learning and teaching. I learned an enormous amount."

Year 4:

"It was great to meet up every week and get outdoors and make a difference with other like-minded people. It was a very engaging programme and I took a lot from it." – **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"I feel more confident in working with other people and trying new things. The scheme helped a lot with my self-esteem and I learnt a lot of valuable new skills. Being outdoors improved my sense of well-being and I am now trained to use strimmer which will look great on my CV. – **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"I really enjoyed the programme as a whole and I discovered I'm much more of an outdoors person than I previously thought." – **Development Week Participant.**

"I really enjoyed every aspect of the course and would recommend it to everybody and I'd definitely do it again." – **Development Week Participant.**

"I had a very enjoyable experience. I wish it had been even longer." – **UESP Participant**

"I will definitely be returning to explore the Belfast Hills and I'm going to sign up as a volunteer for environmental conservation work." – **UESP Participant**

"It was a very interesting week. We got a great insight into the local environmental sector and it was very beneficial to meet the experts on the ground. Highly recommended." – **UESP Participant**

Year 5:

"I found it easier than expected to make friends, had opportunities to network, looked forward to Tuesdays every week and learnt a large range of skills that will help me find a job in the conservation sector" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"I will make a conscious effort to get out into nature once a week, I will be more confident in applying for jobs and will not hold back from volunteering just because I'm scared of not knowing people" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"Having the opportunity to work with children at the STEM event and outdoor learning in Falls Park, made me realise I really want to work in environmental education and outreach" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"I know that I will take more opportunities to volunteer, particularly outdoors, as it made me feel like I was making a real difference. I will go out of my way to go on walks in places like the hills, I have found being outdoors really calming" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"I came in being the youngest, just out of school and felt very small compared to everyone else that had done degrees/more experience. However, chatting to everyone and doing the mock interviews, really boosted my confidence and made me feel more comfortable to be myself" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"All in all I've been at my happiest doing this scheme and plan to continue being actively involved" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"My wellbeing has increased after every session, it really makes you feel physically and mentally good, which subsequently improves your self-esteem. You do have to speak in front of people during group sessions or general settings, so it's best to just say your piece rather than feel uncomfortable about it. So I would say I'm better at speaking publicly than when I first began the course" - **Trainee Ranger Scheme Participant.**

"An excellent training day with a wonderful tutor. Feel much more confident conducting fieldwork now, thank you" – **PGCE Outdoor Learning Course**

"An excellent course. Very helpful and friendly staff. Brilliant explanations and examples. Many thanks for an excellent time" – **PGCE Outdoor Learning Course**

	<p>“Really valuable! Patricia’s wealth of knowledge was extraordinary! Thank you!” – PGCE Outdoor Learning Course</p> <p>“A very informative day. Patricia was lovely and very helpful. I will definitely recommend BHP to my schools.” – PGCE Outdoor Learning Course</p> <p>“Excellent course, excellent tutor, a great course for coming up to speed with QGIS” – GPS/GIS Course</p> <p>“Patricia is an excellent tutor, very clear, concise and patient” – GPS/GIS Course</p> <p>“Great course, very complete, going through different topics, very well explained and very useful” – GPS/GIS Course</p> <p>“Patricia was very friendly, welcoming, patient and knowledgeable. Would recommend class to others” – GPS/GIS Course</p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>Social media</p> <p>Radio Ulster Interview (for TR Scheme)</p> <p>Belfast Live https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/you-fancy-becoming-belfast-hills-15155514</p> <p>Netwonabbey Times https://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/signing-up-for-a-bright-future-in-the-belfast-hills-1-8602285</p> <p>Irish News https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2020/09/27/news/the-new-normal-how-a-trainee-ranger-scheme-is-helping-young-people-s-job-prospects-during-lockdown-2077554/</p> <p>Larne Times https://www.larnetimes.co.uk/education/trainee-ranger-scheme-launched-18-24-year-olds-2980449</p> <p>NVTV https://www.nvtv.co.uk/shows/the-round-up-wednesday-23rd-september-2020/</p>



Project	1.7 – Other young people led suggestions
Officer responsible for monitoring	David Scott & Patricia Deeney / John McLaughlin
Aims & objectives	To give young people the opportunity to undertake small scale environmental projects, empowering them to make a positive impact on their local environment.
Outputs	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 young people from QUB inputted into suggestions for the Belfast Hills Society • 3 young people from Springvale undertook bird box design and creation works, producing bird boxes that have been installed in the Belfast Hills • 5 Uni students undertook wildfire survey and management advice work across the hills area • 1 youth ambassador for OBF UK <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Hills Society: Jan – June 2017 – 50 paid members Sept – Dec 2017 – 22 paid members 140 young people on the mailing list There have been 15 events in 2017. We also have 4 young people on our student committee, who help deal with the society admin, finances and ideas for event (along with the brainstorming we do with all members at the start of the year). • 10 projects which have been led by students themselves = 22 young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 group projects and 4 individuals working on projects by themselves. - 2 of these projects this year have gained a John Muir Explorer Award (the second level of the award scheme) 2 projects are still in the process of finishing and will get their award in the new year – 2018. And 7 young people are gaining a Millennium Volunteer certificates thanks to the hours they worked towards their project. - This is thanks to a brand new partnership this year between ourselves and the geography department in QUB, and also the ongoing partnership with the Science Shop, as well as individuals who attend our volunteering tasks and events. • 1 new youth ambassador <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Hills Society – 86 different young people (not including older members) Jan – June 2018 – 59 members Sept – Dec 2018 – 36 members 171 young people on the mailing list There have been 21 events in 2018 (15x Wednesday events during term time, 2x Nature Photography events and 4x adhoc events during the summer). We also had 4 young people on our student committee, who help deal with the society admin, finances and ideas for events (along with the brainstorming we do with all members at the start of the year). They completed their term as committee members in June 2018. Three

	<p>of the four committee members received Millennium Volunteer certificates for their work.</p> <p>The committee members of the Belfast Hills Society gained experience in applying for funding, and handling budgets, as they were awarded £550 to organise their own event for Development Week in May 2018 (Nature Photography). They also got to order and sell their own society hoodies, with the money they were awarded last year as part of the QUB recurrent grant £465.96.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, there have been 7 projects which have been led by students themselves and completed by 13 young people) with another project currently on the go (6 young people) due to be completed in March 2019. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 group projects (9 young people) and 4 individuals working on projects by themselves. - 3 of these projects have gained a John Muir Explorer Award (the second level of the award scheme – for James, Sam and Joy) - This is thanks to the continuation of the partnership set up last year between ourselves and the geography department in QUB, and also the ongoing partnership with the Science Shop, as well as individuals who attend our volunteering tasks and events. • 1 new youth ambassador – Niamh <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 205 young people on the mailing list. • There have been 6 QUB Hills Society events (Until sept) in 2019 (Wednesday events during term time.) • 2 students gained a Millennium Volunteer certificate. • 1 BHP Projects Assistant (QUB Placement Student). • 6 QUB students completed a ‘Geography at Work’ Project. <p>Year 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 292 young people on the mailing list. • There have been 7 QUB Hills Society events in 2020 • 1 young person created her own fundraising campaign to raise money for the BHP. Setting up a ‘Bring your own cup’ initiative at the Queen’s student village coffee shop. • 1 young person applied and was awarded the BHP Environment Fund to put her own idea into action. She organised and ran a nature craft event in Feb 2020. • 4 QUB students started a ‘Geography at Work’ Project.
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment of young folk as they got to come up with ideas then follow through with the required work • The wildfire students got a better appreciation of working together as a team and coordinating their time • Support in rolling out the #owning it campaign <p>Year 2:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students in the Belfast Hills Society were registered as a branch of the Tree Charter and got to take part in a campaign, as well as get experience in raising awareness of issues relating to the environment. • Young people got to develop their team working skills and experience a project from it's conception right through to completion. One of the groups event got experience in how to handle budgets and plan volunteer tasks (see feedback obtained) <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students in the Belfast Hills Society gained experience in applying for funding, handling budgets, and planning events after they received the Development Week Student Event fund and QUB Recurrent Grant (last year). <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people from QUB hills society empowered by coming up with ideas for potential habitat work during Wednesday sessions. • Students developed communication and team working skills while carrying out habitat management tasks on-site. • QUB Geography at Work students developed and carried out their own project to investigate the motivations of people engaging with wildlife across the Belfast Hills, specifically informal wildlife recording. • 1 QUB Masters student completed a 3 month placement with BHP assisting and developing various projects relating to the Belfast hills (Outdoor education, Invasive Species Mapping, GIS) and gained a Millenium Volunteer Award. <p>Year 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The young people who organised their own events (fundraising and BHP Environmental Fund) gained experience in applying for funding, handling budgets, marketing and planning/delivering an event • Students developed practical conservation skills, communication and team working skills while carrying out habitat management tasks on-site. • QUB Geography at Work students got a chance to put their theoretical knowledge into practise by starting a project on natural flood mitigation strategies, they also developed teamwork and communication as well as GPS surveying and GIS skills.
Volunteer time	<p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Bradley gave introductory talks to many of the young people who were beginning projects totalling 8 hours, and even assisted with site visits and explaining fieldwork methodologies on two occasions totalling 5 hours = £225 <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Meharg gave introductory talks to students from the Belfast Hills Society during habitat management tasks worth £225 • Jim Bradley gave introductory talks to young people conducting two separate projects worth £64.29 <p>Year 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Meharg gave introductory talks to students from the Belfast Hills Society during habitat management tasks and also treated stumps with herbicide worth £225
Donations in kind	Year 2:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast Hills Society awarded QUB recurrent grant £465.96 <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast Hills Society awarded £550 from QUB Development Week fund to develop their own Student-Led Event – Nature Photography Students from Belfast Hills Society contribute £2 each towards transport costs for every event they attend from Oct 2018, totalling £84.50
Who involved?	Uni students, Graduates, Springvale training students
Feedback obtained	<p>Year 1: For the young people who took on leadership/coordination roles there was at times frustration as their peers didn't always do what they wanted them to do. This however is very much part of the learning curve of leadership and working with others, so we would always take the positive outlook encouraging the young person in the development of leadership skills.</p> <p>Our Yr 1 youth ambassador Noush really benefited from attending the workshop and seminar, gaining a better understanding of a large UK wide project and how it can make an impact. It was also a great talking point in job interviews.</p> <p>Year 2: <i>"I learned how to budget, how to work as part of a successful team and the workings of a project from beginning to end. I believe this will be very beneficial for future job projects."</i> Project on Edmund Rice wildlife area</p> <p><i>"I enjoyed working with a team of like-minded individuals on a project that was very interesting and not like anything I had done before. As this project was carried out over the summer months, and not the academic year, I felt like I could dedicate more time and effort into the project also and I am very happy and proud of the work that my group and I completed."</i> Project on Edmund Rice wildlife area</p> <p>There were a number of hiccups with a few groups who struggled with the independent nature of the projects and some of the group work elements, but thankfully worked through the issues, and learned a number of important skills in the process...</p> <p><i>"Personally, I would have considered myself experienced in group work due to playing team sports for 17 years but the chance to work in a group in the professional environment was appreciated. This came with its own complications and challenges, although new skills were achieved. One of these challenges came from the freedom and unfamiliar lack of supervision from this project. This was evident on numerous occasions such as, setting individual and group goals and deadlines to be more efficient in our work, managing our time in the field and ensuring each member of the group remained motivated towards our final goal. Time management, interpersonal skills and flexibility skills were all gained."</i> Student from the Geography at Work QUB module doing a project on wildfires.</p> <p><i>"Overall, I believe this module, and project working with BHP, is an experience I did not think I would have participated in my final year, but has helped me gain vital skills and qualities that I will carry with me for life."</i> Student from the Geography at Work QUB module doing a project on water quality.</p>

*"Of course, group work is aimed at improving skills such as working as a team, communication and organisation. Within the group I believe communication skills developed, however, between the group and the employer communication could have been massively improved. Though this is an identified shortcoming, what can be drawn from it is that in the future an added emphasis on communication with superiors will be applied. Of course, this does not excuse this inadequacy, but it does leave room for improvement, which is what, in my eyes, I wanted to take from this module. To be able to improve employability skills and identify areas in which I need to improve to improve my employability." **Student from the Geography at Work QUB module doing a project on water quality.***

Year 3:

Quotes from the Belfast Hills Society Committee Sept 17 – June 18 on how they found the experience:

"When I first got the spot as President of the society, I was really nervous about the responsibility. 7 months later, I can honestly say it's been the best part of my year. It's provided me with so many opportunities, and the other committee members were some of the coolest, most fun people ever. Would do it again in a heartbeat." Joy, President and studying Environmental Management.

"If I were to sum up what it is like to be a committee member, I could only think of nothing but one word, "teamwork". Being part of the committee is a great experience as I get to learn how to handle matters in the society, not only by myself but also with the help of other committee members." Jason, Joint Treasurer and studying History and Politics.

"The whole experience of being a member of the committee has been extremely enjoyable. I have been able to meet a fabulous group of likeminded people, which has improved skills in teamwork, event management and has built my confidence no end ! So don't miss out on this great opportunity, it's a decision that I have never regretted!" Jenny, Joint Treasurer and studying Film.

"Be inspired is what I always feel in this society, as one of the committee members. Throughout my second and final years I feel relieved to share so many good memories with everyone in the society. Proud of being one of this team and appreciate to stand a chance to engage with other committee members. Love you all." Evelyn, Secretary and studying Marine Biology.

Quotes from the evaluation forms of Geography at Work students:

What did you enjoy / find most beneficial from completing the project?

- *"Working on a project that was relevant and useful for organisations like the Belfast Hills Partnership and the Nationals Trust. The teamwork element and cooperation aspect with Patricia has equipped us for how to work within and manage group projects when we get graduate jobs, as the same skills apply."*
- *"The aspect of working with an outside employer such as The Belfast Hills especially on the topic of wildfires as it is a current issue. I have*

gained experience with working with professional employers but also knowledge of wildfires and GIS.”

- “Working with the Belfast hills was a great experience, Patricia was very responsive to our questions. I was particularly impressed with the feedback from the first draft of the report. We received three pages of detailed constructive feedback within days of sending the report, from talking to groups in the module working for other employers, the same was not provided. I believe I developed my communication skills by working with a separate organisation from Queens, this will be of benefit to me in the future world of work. I felt that going into the field to see the impact of wildfire on the landscape and how the vegetation recovers at different rates was essential in understanding our project, this was certainly beneficial. I also enjoyed learning more about what the Partnership does.”
- “Great being able to work with an employer and feel the work that I have done is useful to the partnership.”
- “Working as a team to get the work completed. Having regular meet ups. This felt like a very professional module that would be useful in future for the work place. I enjoyed the presentations as it felt very professional and had a sense of achievement after it.”

Will you undertake any further activities as a result of taking part in this project? e.g. follow up learning, repeat visits to the Hills, volunteering, presentations etc

- “This project has made me consider my career prospects once I graduate, and has instilled how important environmental sustainability is. Hence, I would be keen to carry out projects similar to this again, and possibly volunteer with the Belfast Hills or other organisations alike.”
- “I very much enjoyed the site visit to Cavehill and I hope to visit the Hills again in better weather conditions.”
- “After visiting the hills to see the impact of wildfires, I would like to revisit the sites in a few months to see the progress of vegetation recovery. It has also made me more aware of the Hills in general and I would consider walking there more often and reading more about the area.”
- “Yes, absolutely. I think that the Belfast Hills partnership offers great programs to further develop the skills I have gained from this project. “
- “This has informed me in areas I want to work in after uni that I wasn’t aware of before, planning and conservation area of employment.”

Has your participation in the project changed your view on the environment or Belfast Hills?

- “It has reinforced how environmental sustainability is so important.”
- “It has opened my eyes more to issues such as young people burning vegetation and the difficulty with reducing the impact humans cause on such environments.”
- “It made me realise the BHP has a wide scope and the work they do essential.”
- “Seen how crucial visitors impact the environment, through from a wide range of reasons outlined in our project. Also speaking to a

	<p>number of questionnaires it was good to hear the views of 51 other people who use the site.”</p> <p>Other comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Overall, the experience was very helpful and interesting. I would recommend for other students.” • “I thoroughly enjoyed completing this project for the Belfast Hills Partnership, this was mainly due to the helpful and responsive feedback from Patricia. She was well organised and knowledgeable, and was happy to answer any questions we had. Feedback was detailed and prompt, very useful when completing both the report and presentation. I would highly recommend working with this organisation in the future.” <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Being involved in the project has given me the opportunity to develop so many skills including organisation, communication, time management and presentation skills. It has been really rewarding to see the pupils get so much out of the sessions – both enjoyment and some new skills and knowledge, and I have built up so much more self-confidence than I had when I started; I never thought I’d be able to lead my own groups so quickly! It has helped me narrow down what I might like to do in the future and given me the tools to go out and pursue the kind of career that I want for myself. I feel that I am now in a much stronger and more confident position to go after jobs once I (hopefully!) graduate at the end of the year and will be able to take everything I have learned with me into the scary (but exciting) big world of work and hopefully make a positive impact!”. Laura Shiels <p>Year 5 Feedback from Gemma, following her BHP Environment Fund event: <i>What skills have you developed from your project?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased confidence: I am more confident in my skills and ideas through doing this workshop. -Increased self-esteem: It makes me feel happy that people turned up for this workshop and made me feel accomplished and proud that I organised it. -Increased wellbeing: I enjoy arts and crafts so doing this was very relaxing and enjoyable. -Project management skills: I know I am able to organise a project from start to finish and have confidence in doing it. -Public speaking skills: I am more comfortable talking in front of a group and helping people who don’t speak fluent English. -Vocational skills: If I would like to work with children, I now have more experience in doing so.
Publicity	Via facebook and twitter posts.



Project	2.1 Community Archaeology Archaeology Dig, training, talks etc. at Divis
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan & Lizzy Pinkerton
Aims & objectives	<p>The community archaeology dig aimed to provide a platform to engage with a huge diversity of individuals as well as inspire young people, about the rich heritage of Divis Mountain, and the wider Belfast Hills area. By offering archaeology sessions to schools, youth groups and families we planned to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspire young people to become passionate about their local heritage. - Encourage young people to explore and discover the rich history on their doorstep. - Empower young people to develop new skills relevant to developing their future careers and volunteering. - Encourage young people, residents and local communities to value and protect their built heritage and cultural environment. - Bring the past to life through archaeology and creative engagement. <p>The aim of this 2017 project was to excavate the Cashel, to the north of the Warden's office and one of the allegedly 'Bronze Age' hut sites, along the river.</p> <p>Another objective was that the archaeological survey training courses offered would help empower local people to get involved in undertaking basic surveys of sites across the whole of the Belfast Hills, helping to pull together a bigger picture of the heritage of the Belfast Hills.</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two weeks of school visits were delivered on Divis Mountain, specifically for the schools in greater Belfast and Lisburn areas. - Pre-site visits in the form of an archaeology roadshow, were also given to all classes, at their schools, talking to them about archaeology. - A public open day was held on the Saturday, as well as a walk and talk event was also held relating to the history of the site along with one day of archaeological survey work training. <p>School children - 387 School teachers/classroom assistants – 38 Open day - 142 Walk & talk event - 25 Survey day - 18 Ulster Archaeological Society -26 International Students - 23 UAS Visit - 23</p> <p>Total = 682</p> <p>The excavation was led by Harry Walsh, from Queens Centre for Archaeology and Fieldwork, and it uncovered artefacts such as Neolithic flint scraping tools (c.4000BC - c.2500BC) as well as various fragments of flint, showing clear evidence of flint tool production on Divis. Various bits of metal work were also found, perhaps suggesting a forge. However, the archaeologists were particularly excited by the Bronze Age pottery</p>

	fragments (c.2500BC – c.500BC), found by the cairn, where cremated bodies would have been laid to rest.
Outcomes	<p>The feedback obtained demonstrates that the dig did enhance young people’s understanding of the rich heritage of their local area. Likewise, it appears to have wetted their appetites for more, as all schools indicated that they would be interested in further talks and events. 100% of the feedback forms indicated that the dig had increased pupils knowledge, communication skills and their connection to wild places. Similarly, all feedback suggested they had increased respect for the environment as a result of taking part in this project. Schools reported that pupils were keen to bring their families back to visit the Hills.</p> <p><i>Maria McCann from Oakwood Integrated left the following feedback:</i></p> <p>Confidence - speaking to new people and trying out new skills e.g. excavation.</p> <p>Environmental knowledge - when you drop litter it stays there for a long time!</p> <p>Increased well-being - great for pupils to get out and be physically active.</p> <p>Communication skills - speaking to team members in groups and thinking about strategies for digging.</p> <p>Leadership skills - some pupils in the group took the lead and demonstrated to less able pupils what to do.</p> <p>Connection to wild places - just being high up in the mountain was great for some of our pupils who would never have experienced that before.</p>
Volunteer time	<p>Most of the man power for the dig was provided by the Ulster Archaeological Society who provided 183 volunteer days to excavate the site with a value of £27,450.</p> <p>We also had a volunteer who assisted with the school outreach sessions and led dig sessions for the schools of the dig this came to a total of 11 days.</p>
Donations in kind	The National Trust provided their own archaeologist to help get all the required consents, assist with the dig as well as the site warden and visitor experience staff. They also provided PR support for the event.
Any changes?	The dig ran very much according to plan. One school group didn’t bother to come on the day. Another cancelled a week beforehand, but we managed to get another to take its place; this school had smaller class sizes so the engagement figures were not quite as high as we had hoped.
Any future recommendations?	Potentially add a cancellation fee to ensure that groups show up that have booked on.
Who involved?	<p>Belfast Hills Partnership National Trust NIEA Built Heritage QUB Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork Volunteers Local Schools Community groups General public Heritage Lottery Our Bright Future</p>
Feedback obtained	<p>All feedback forms are being kept on file, some of the comments are quoted below, giving you a taster of people’s thoughts on their dig experience:</p> <p>“Our pupils really enjoyed learning about how people lived during the Stone Age and Bronze Age, seeing artefacts and participating in the dig really brought history to life for them”.</p>

	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Stephanie McIntyre Longstone Special Needs School</i></p> <p>“Our pupils learned that the mountain is on their doorstep, yet only one child out of 28 had visited it. A lot said that they will try to visit it. The understood about respecting the land and were able to differentiate between flint and other rocks”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Mark Knipe St Gerard’s Special Needs School</i></p> <p>“They learned that history is relevant to them today and that they were actually making history by discovering items and evidence of fires and flint. They also liked the fact that history is beneath their feet. A lot of back gardens were going to be dug up this weekend. Belfast Hills are fantastic, everything was pitched at the right level and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the day – thanks so much!</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Diane McCausland, St Patricks Academy</i></p> <p>“Children better able to talk about their local, yet remote environment and its history - giving them a greater sense of connection to their surroundings and to the past”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Pilib Mistrel, Head Teacher, Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh</i></p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>Newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish News ▪ North Belfast News ▪ Andersonstown News <p>Radio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BBC Gaeilge <p>Websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BHP facebook page & website ▪ BBC things to do website ▪ Visit Belfast website ▪ National website ▪ Outdoor NI website ▪ NI Archaeology Forum



Project	2.1 Community Archaeology Archaeology Dig, training, talks etc at Slievenacloy Completed 1.8.2016
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan & Lizzy Pinkerton
Aims & objectives	<p>The community archaeology dig aimed to provide a platform to engage with a huge diversity of individuals as well as inspire young people about the rich heritage of Slievenacloy and the wider Belfast Hills area. We involved a number of students from QUB, using the dig as an excavation training exercise providing hands on experience of an archaeology dig under the supervision of the Centre for Archaeological Field Work staff.</p> <p>During our 2015 excavation, we unlocked some of the secrets to the site. We discovered that the earthen bank was early medieval. Organic material, removed from the ditch, was radiocarbon dated and came back suggesting it dated back to the 8th – 10th century. Furthermore, we uncovered a house, dating back to the 13th Century. Various flints and pieces of pottery were uncovered. Most of the pottery dated from early medieval times and seemed to suggest that the house remains uncovered date from that period. A wooden gaming piece was also uncovered which is believed to be medieval. The level of worked flint chippings as well as a Neolithic hollow scraper indicated that early man was also present on the site at some point.</p> <p>The aim of this excavation was to continue the work started in 2015, as we only unearthed half of the early medieval dwelling, and wanted to excavate the second half of the house, as well as open up another trench in the earthen bank. Additionally, we wanted to further explore the Possibility of Neolithic occupation of the site.</p> <p>Another objective was that the archaeological survey training courses offered would help empower local people to get involved in undertaking basic surveys of sites across the whole of the Belfast Hills over the subsequent years of the LPS, helping to pull together a bigger picture of the heritage of the Belfast Hills.</p>
Outputs	<p>The dig was held over a four-week period, and during this time students from QUB undertook practical field archaeology, focusing on excavating remains of a dwelling and part of the ditch. Two weeks of school visits on the site were also undertaken specifically for the schools in the local area to Slievenacloy. Pre site visits were also given to all classes at their schools talking to them about archaeology. A public open day was held on the Saturday. A walk and talk event was also held relating to the history of the site along with one day of archaeological survey work training.</p> <p>School children - 329 School teachers/classroom assistants – 34 YAC- 37 Open day - 48 Walk & talk event - 15 Survey day - 7 QUB students - 16 (daily) Other visitors - 18</p> <p>Total = 504</p>

	In relation to the dig various flints and pieces of pottery were uncovered. In the trench in the centre of the site lots of Neolithic flint was excavated by the young people, including a beautiful Neolithic scraper. Pieces of Neolithic pottery were also excavated and the possible foundation of Neolithic huts. In the trench, with the early medieval dwelling, we uncovered a Neolithic porcellanite axe, which may have been used as a 'thunder bolt' in Early Medieval times.
Outcomes	The feedback obtained from people shows that the dig did enhance peoples understanding of the rich history and heritage of the area. Likewise it appears to have wetted peoples appetites for more as all schools indicated that they would be interested in further talks and events, while a lot of the people on the training course wanted further opportunities to do surveys both with BHP and the UAS. The walk and talk event has also encouraged people to explore the Belfast Hills further as a lot of people had never been at Slievenacloy before.
Volunteer time	Most of the man power for the dig was provided by 16 archaeology students from QUB over four weeks = 320 volunteer days We also had a volunteer who assisted with the school outreach sessions and led dig sessions for the schools of the dig this came to a total of 23 days.
Donations in kind	Ulster Wildlife Trust provided a member of staff to help get all the required ASSI consents, run the dig and also provided PR support for the event, approx. value of £1000.
Any changes?	The dig ran very much according to plan. One school group, which had booked several places, cancelled at the last minute. However, we managed to get another to take its place; this school had smaller class sizes so the engagement figures were not quite as high as we had hoped.
Any future recommendations?	We have completed two concurrent excavations at Slievenacloy, which have been produced excellent archaeological finds, however we believe that it will be exciting to excavate another site in the Belfast Hills and might encourage groups to book again.
Who involved?	Belfast Hills Partnership Ulster Wildlife NIEA Built Heritage QUB Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork Volunteers Local Schools Community groups General public
Feedback obtained	Feedback was obtained via official evaluation sheets, a comments book, comments posted online, emails received etc. All feedback forms are being kept on file, some of the comments are quoted below, giving you a taster of peoples thoughts on their dig experience: - School visits I hoped our pupils would have a greater appreciation of their local environment and a tangible connection to history. What they learned from taking part was the importance of looking at seemingly empty spaces, such as the Belfast Hills, and realising the richness. The kids loved the experience and relished the questions about what they had found. <i>Pilib Mistéil, Bunscoil an tSléibhe Dhuibh.</i> I hoped that pupils would learn basic archaeological skills, through active participation in an excavation of a local site, and that they would have a better understanding of the various ages. The pupils really enjoyed digging

	<p>the site and finding charcoal and pottery. I feel that they now have a much better understanding of how people lived and the tools they used during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. This was an excellent event, it was great to spend time, outdoors, with pupils, actively discovering local history, through excavation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Carol Gallagher, Christian Brothers School, Belfast</i></p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>Newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish News ▪ North Belfast News ▪ Andersonstown News <p>Radio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BBC: Your place and mine <p>Websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BHP facebook page & website ▪ BBC things to do website ▪ Visit Belfast website ▪ Ulster Wildlife website ▪ Outdoor NI website ▪ NI Archaeology Forum

Visits to all the school groups was undertaken before they visited the dig, giving a chance to talk to them about what archaeology is and the history of the Belfast Hills. They got to handle some archaeology finds and ask a multitude of questions!



Project	2.2 Work On School Grounds <i>2017 schools: Christian Brothers School Project & Longstone Special School</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>The aims of the school grounds project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use school grounds as a resource to engage the wider community in the natural environment. • To increase the ability of young people to improve places that are important to them and to influence the attitudes and decisions that shape neighbourhoods and communities. • To raise awareness of the importance of schools grounds, by conserving and enhancing existing biodiversity and encouraging good nature conservation practice within the school environment. • To empower young people to gain new skills by improving their local environment.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 111 young people. • Wider engagement 700 pupils (whole school) • Creation of one 80m² wildflower meadow. • Lesson on importance of pollinators • Planted native trees around 125m of school grounds perimeter with year 8's • School grounds Polli:Nation species survey with year 8's • Raking meadow, preparing the soil and sowing with year 8's. • Planted fruit trees (orchard) with year 10's and year 14's • Creation of Nature Nook biodiversity garden • Planted edible hedgerow with eco-committee <p>As part of their Discovery John Muir Award, year 8's from Glen Road Christian Brothers' School made space for nature, in their school grounds, by planting trees along the perimeter of the grounds. They also created a wildflower meadow beside the sports pitches. The young people used the Opal Polli:Nation survey to undertake an investigation of pollinators before the transformation was made and then surveyed the area again in summer 2017.</p> <p>Longstone School contacted us, after seeing BBC Newsline cover our 'salmon in the classroom' project. They had an area of unused grass that they wanted to convert into a nature garden for their pupils. What they wanted to achieve was beyond the budget we had available and we signposted them to other funding opportunities. They managed to secure funding to put in paths and play equipment, with the view that BHP would oversee and pay for the biodiversity improvements. Once the infrastructure works were complete, we met with the school and decided that the young people would make these changes using the John Muir Award.</p> <p>As part of their Discovery Award, the Eco- Committee from Longstone Special School made space for nature, in their school grounds, by planting an edible hedge along the perimeter of the grounds. They also created the Nature Nook biodiversity garden with wheelchair friendly planters, planted with pollinator friendly flowers and herbs, orchard trees to attract pollinators and fruit bushes to feed native birds. The young people spent 4 days in total completing their John Muir Award, 1.5 of these days were spent carrying out the school grounds project. The Nature Nook was launched in June, by the Mayor for Lisburn and Castlereagh Council, Tim Morrow. The Eco-committee did a whole school presentation on their project and John Muir Award.</p>

Outcomes	<p>The young people involved in the project increased their knowledge of native plant and pollinator species. They learned how to create a pollinator friendly orchard and why native plants are important for biodiversity.</p> <p>The school were extremely satisfied with their school grounds improvements. Teachers commented that the boys had really enjoyed make in the change in their local area and thus had developed an increased connection to wild places and a new respect for the environment as a result of being involved in the wider Belfast Hills project. When the boys went to survey the meadow in June, they were upset when the activity finished, as they were enjoying themselves so much, finding pollinators.</p>
Volunteer time	Our QUB placement student Eoghan O'Neill spent 1 full day assisting Jo with the delivery of the project at Longstone. Furthermore another volunteer Paul spent a half day digging holes for the large rooted fruit bushes and trees.
Donations in kind	Teachers helped with the planning and delivery of this project. The schools paid for plants and compost. Lisburn and Castlereagh Council also made contributions to this project. They built a minibeasts mansion, put in a welcome sign and created a bird table.
Any changes?	We will not have a member of staff with rotovator experience for any further meadow projects.
Any future recommendations?	We will have to get quotes from landscaper's for future projects.
10year maintenance	The school are committed to maintaining the improvements made to their school grounds. The have already contributed by fencing off the meadow, to protect it from the mowers. The young people will revisit the meadow in September to survey and cut and lift the grass/ wildflowers.
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, all of year 8 CBS and teachers.
Feedback obtained	<p>This project was completed as part of a John Muir Discovery Award. Feedback was sought at the end of the award.</p> <p>"We are delighted that our boys have been offered the chance to work with Jo and the team. The John Muir Award has been a unique experience that they will always remember. It was great having the opportunity to plant trees and wildflowers in our school grounds, helping them develop pride in their own area. Some of them could have looked for minibeasts all day!" Chris Smyth, Glen Road CBS</p> <p><i>The Nature Nook is a whole school resource, used by Key Stage One and Two pupils as a place to practise motor skills, develop an awareness of the environment and use their imagination through play. The Key Stage Three and Four pupils use the sensory garden for projects such as the John Muir Award, facilitated by Jo Boylan from the Belfast Hills Partnership and funded by Our Bright Future. For the John Muir Award pupils undertook conservation work both in the school grounds and on the Belfast Hills. The older pupils are gaining experience of being good citizens through the Nature Nook as the Eco-Schools Committee members spend time maintaining and improving the space on a weekly basis. Stephanie McIntyre</i></p>
Publicity	BHP website, social media & Local press, school website and newsletter. Local council website.



Project	2.2 Work On School Grounds <i>2018 schools: St Colm's High, Edmund Rice, St Louise's, Malone College</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>The aims of the school grounds project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use school grounds as a resource to engage the wider community in the natural environment. • To increase the ability of young people to improve places that are important to them and to influence the attitudes and decisions that shape neighbourhoods and communities. • To raise awareness of the importance of schools grounds, by conserving and enhancing existing biodiversity and encouraging good nature conservation practice within the school environment. • To empower young people to gain new skills by improving their local environment.
Outputs	<p>As part of their Discovery John Muir Award young people made space for nature, in their school grounds. Jo met with each class giving them a lesson on the importance of pollinators and biodiversity, then set them the task of coming up with a design for their garden. The grounds were a complete blank canvass.</p> <p>Generally we work with 'Nurture Groups' who are considered to be a low academic ability class as this project was seen as a way to encourage them to learn new skills outside the classroom in a kinaesthetic way. They really got stuck in to the project and came up with some brilliant designs, which Jo interpreted and made into a reality.</p>  



St Colms

- Directly engaged with 15 young people over 5 sessions
- Wider engagement 390 pupils (whole school)
- Preparation and sowing of 16m² of wildflower meadow.
- Lesson on importance of pollinators
- Planted 20m of edible hedgerow with native tree species.
- Planted 450 crocus and daffodil bulbs for early emerging pollinating insects
- Planted fruit trees for pollinators
- Erected vegetable planters for growing food, pallet planter, insect biome and bird table

Edmund Rice

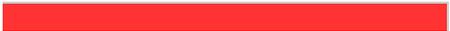
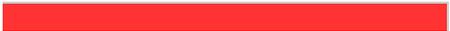
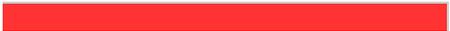
- Directly engaged with 16 young people.
- Wider engagement 650 pupils (whole school)
- Lesson on importance of pollinators
- Project working up ideas for the garden with art department
- Cutting back hedgerows and weeding overgrown trees.
- Clearance of vegetable planters for growing food, herbs and pollinator friendly plants.

St Louise's

- Directly engaged with 21 young people.
- Wider engagement 1600 pupils (whole school)
- Lesson on importance of pollinators
- Planted 15m of edible hedgerow with native tree species.
- Woodland management of native trees
- Planted fruit trees for pollinators
- Cleared vegetable planters for growing food and herbs
- Created a willow weave butterfly garden
- Painted tyres for growing food / flowers

Malone College

- Directly engaged with 75 young people.
- Session on importance of pollinators.
- Community horticulture recycling project
- 18 community groups collected perennial plants to over winter in greenhouses.
- Planted 500m² of pollinator friendly orchard
- Wider engagement 518 pupils (whole school).

	<p>As part of their John Muir 'Discovery' Award, Year 10's from Malone College engaged in a community horticulture recycling scheme. Perennial plants, like geraniums are usually used for one season and then composted. The plants don't survive the Northern Irish winter, when left in flower beds, however if they are potted and kept in greenhouses they survive perfectly and can be replanted again in the springtime.</p> <p>Groveland Park is immediately adjacent to Malone Integrated College, pupils are able to walk through their grounds and enter the park without crossing any roads or footpaths. The young people felt strongly about the wastage of perfectly good plants, so they set to work digging out each perennial and repotting them in compost. The pupils then took some of the plants back to school, however there were so many that Belfast City Council put out a social media post to community groups and community gardeners to come and collect the flowers. The project was inundated with interest. Community groups arrived to pick up the plants as the young people were digging them out of the ground. It was fantastic, as the pupils could see the immediate fruits of their labour and they felt good that they were helping their local community.</p>				
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The young people involved in the project increased their knowledge of native plant and pollinator species. They have learnt how to plant for pollinators and why native plants are important for biodiversity. They were involved in the planning and delivery of the project. The teachers were thrilled that they had so much input from start to finish, learning valuable project management skills.</p> <p>Before this project had started this class had been asked, by their teacher, to record their achievements. They replied to their teacher, "we've never achieved anything Miss". By the end of the project all of the pupils involved had increased their confidence and developed a sense of achievement and responsibility. They are truly proud of 'their' garden.</p> <p>Their teacher commented that "they've learned to value their environment and the basic principles of caring for it. They developed skills in working as a team and they developed strong friendships with their classmates".</p> <p>The school were extremely satisfied with their school grounds improvements. Some of the young people involved in the orchard project have gone on to form an after schools eco club. They want to look after their school grounds and get more involved with growing vegetables in their planters. Teachers also commented that the pupils really enjoyed helping the wider community. They loved that they were able to wheelbarrow the plants that they had repotted to the gate and directly give them to grateful community groups.</p> <p>The school are extremely satisfied with their school grounds improvements and have great plans for spring. They have already put flowers in their pallet planter and have high hopes for the summer term. Their head of year commented that they had improved in all of the areas below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 1980 1458 2047"> <tr> <td data-bbox="549 1980 596 2047">1</td> <td data-bbox="596 1980 916 2047">Increased confidence</td> <td data-bbox="916 1980 1378 2047"></td> <td data-bbox="1378 1980 1458 2047">100.0 0%</td> </tr> </table>	1	Increased confidence		100.0 0%
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	4	Increased communication skills		100.00%
	5	Increased leadership skills		100.00%
	6	Increased connection to wild places		100.00%
	7	Increased respect for environment		100.00%
Volunteer time	15 young people spent a 1.5 days of their John Muir Award learning about pollinators and carrying out the associated surveys and groundworks.			
Donations in kind	Belfast City Council provided the members of staff and the soil for the planting scheme. We were able to reuse plant pots from the City Council stores.			
Any changes?	We planted the trees in late September, which would usually be fine, but it was a very mild autumn, so we might need to revisit the hedgerow in the Spring to make sure the trees have all survived.			
Any future recommendations?	N/A			
10year maintenance	The school are committed to maintaining the improvements made to their school grounds. They have already contributed by planting flowers in the pallet planter. They have grand plans for the spring/summer term.			
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, St Colm's Nurture group, teachers, parents, caretaker			
Feedback obtained	<p>"The whole school has community benefitted from the creation of the garden. Pupils are keen to further develop it and are making plans for how to use the raised beds in the spring. They are engaged in the project and hopefully, as a result, they will maintain their commitment to the school garden. We also plan to produce a mural or piece of art work for the school garden". Clare McLoughlin, St Colm's High</p> <p>"I hoped that through this project the boys would connect with nature and the outdoor environment. As a direct result of being involved they now understand and appreciate more about food, where it comes from and how to grow it. They have been given ownership of the raised flower beds and they will continue to maintain this section of the school grounds, they are delighted with this responsibility. Furthermore, they understand the importance of not littering and how to care for their environment. I feel they appreciate their local environment much more". Sinead Boyle, Edmund Rice College</p> <p>"My students gained more than I could ever have hoped for. They gain a lot of knowledge about their local community through nature walks and working in the garden. They got to apply their map reading skills in their trek through the Belfast Hills. They learnt how to work in teams and thanks to the wonderful jobs they took on leadership roles within teams which is really hard skill for them to achieve.</p> <p>As a result of this project the girls have a greater understanding of what is right on their doorstep. Thanks to Belfast Hills Partnership they also have a greater understanding of the role that the Hills have to play within the community. Students have also gained a respect for wild places and the</p>			

	<p>animals that live there. Great examples of this can be seen through how students now react to wild animals.</p> <p>The vision for stage two of this project is to use this year's class to lead the future classes in the regeneration of the school gardens and share their experiences through presentations and creative writing.</p> <p>The highlight of this project has been watching the students grow, learn and work together with the team from Belfast City Council and Belfast Hills. It would not have worked with any other people". Lee Kelly, St Louise's Comprehensive College</p> <p><i>"The John Muir Award has had a massive impact on how our young people view wild places. It's hard to believe, but some of the pupils had no idea that you could just plant trees and that they will be able to eat the fruit from their trees in the autumn time. When our kids were shown how to plant trees they were very excited that what they were doing would change the look and feel of the school environment. They are proud that they have made this change, that it was their idea and that they were also able to help other community groups with the plant recycling project.</i></p> <p><i>Since the project finished many of the pupils have requested that an environmental after school club be set up and they have already volunteered to litter pick around the school where they planted trees. It's great to see these individuals become so environmental aware and active as a result of working with the Belfast Hills and Belfast City Council". Brian Pendleton Malone College</i></p>
Publicity	BHP website, social media, School's website and social media





Project	2.2 Work On School Grounds <i>2019 and 2020 schools: St Mary's Grammar, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, St Dominic's Grammar, 6th Belfast Scouts, Mercy College</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>The aims of the school grounds project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use school grounds as a resource to engage the wider community in the natural environment. • To increase the ability of young people to improve places that are important to them and to influence the attitudes and decisions that shape neighbourhoods and communities. • To raise awareness of the importance of schools grounds, by conserving and enhancing existing biodiversity and encouraging good nature conservation practice within the school environment. • To empower young people to gain new skills by improving their local environment.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 250 young people. • Engaged with 4 schools and 1 Scout troop. • Sessions on importance of pollinators. • Planted 200m of hedgerow. • Planted 400m² of pollinator friendly orchard. • Planted 800 early flowering spring bulbs • Wider engagement 3940 pupils (whole school numbers). <p><u>St Mary's Grammar</u></p> <p>I began this project by giving a presentation to 180 Year 9's about the schools grounds project and the importance of pollinators. Young people were then given the chance to come forward to be involved in the project. One class was chosen to complete the GIS training and thus undertook an environmental audit of the school grounds. From this exercise the boys decided that they would like to create more species rich hedgerows within their school grounds. They chose an area 115m long and then planted it up. In autumn they planted about 400 daffodils and crocuses as a nectar source for early emerging pollinating insects. They also created a small orchard at the front of their school to attract pollinators. Finally, they created a growing space with veg beds, herb planters for pollinators, insect hotel and bird table. This project won the West Belfast Partnership Community Environmental Awards in December 2020.</p> <p><u>St Dominic's Grammar</u></p> <p>Ciarraí Culbert, our Youth Ambassador, is a member of St Dominic's Eco-Committee. She organised for Belfast Hills Partnership to give a presentation to the Eco-club, on the school grounds project, from that the girls decided that they'd like to plant trees in the winter (30m wildlife hedgerow) and create some willow weave planters. Their school grounds are situated in a very urban area, so they are limited by space. In autumn they planted about daffodils and crocuses as a nectar source for early emerging pollinating</p>

insects. They also created a small willow weave flower bed with Belfast City Council.

Our Lady & St Patrick's College (Knock)

Twenty five Year 9 pupils from Knock undertook the GIS training. As part of this course the young people carried out an environmental audit of their school grounds. They identified an area that had been used for growing vegetables, but was in need of a revamp. They decided to plant 40m of edible hedgerow as well as plant 400m² of orchard trees. This project directly resulted in the formation of a school biodiversity team. The team are now planning how to regenerate the veg patch/herb garden to compliment the fruit grown in the orchard and hope to plant a wildflower meadow next year. The pupils have also made links with their technology department to make some bird boxes for the wildlife area to further promote biodiversity.

6th Belfast Scouts

6th Belfast scout leader, Ian Fleck, contacted us in January, saying that they would like to do some kind of conservation project and work towards achieving an environment badge. Jo visited the group and together with the kids they brainstormed ideas, to create an environmental action plan. The young people were asked what they cared about and what activities they would like to do to make a change in their local community. The results from this session lead to a community tree planting project, at Valley Park, and a huge community litter awareness campaign and litter lift on Cave Hill. Some of the young people expressed their desire to grow their own vegetables, however their scout grounds were tarmac and they didn't think they could. We provided them with some painted tyres, which we recycled from fly-tipping sites in the Hills and we also bought them a wooden planter. Jo delivered a session on the importance of pollinating insects and they recycled toilet tubes, which they collected from home to grow seeds in. These seedlings were then transferred to the new wooden planters. They also planted pollinator friendly plants in the recycled tyres and pallets planters to try to attract insects to their once barren garden. This project was completely young people led, they got in touch with us for help, but they came up with all the ideas, which we just facilitated.

Mercy College

We worked with a small group of Year 9s from Mercy College to carry out improvements to their school grounds in order to benefit pollinators. During an introductory classroom session, pupils developed and designed ideas for their school grounds project and what they would like to achieve during the following sessions. The young people created planters from recycled tyres and planted pollinator-friendly plants, as well as creating a herb garden and setting up two bug hotels around their wooden seating area. Pupils have taken on responsibility for watering and caring for their garden through their eco-club and are planning to carry out further improvements in the summer months.

Year 8s and 9s also planted a hedgerow of 150 whips in order to increase biodiversity in their school grounds.

<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The young people involved in the projects increased their knowledge of native plant and pollinator species. They've learned how to create species rich hedgerows and pollinator friendly orchards and woodlands. Furthermore, they have learned why native plants are important for biodiversity.</p> <p>The schools were extremely satisfied with their school grounds improvements. Some of the young people involved in the orchard project have gone on to form an after schools biodiversity team. The team are now planning how to regenerate the veg patch/herb garden to compliment the fruit grown in the orchard and hope to plant a wildflower meadow next year.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 577 1460 1093"> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Increased confidence</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Increased environmental knowledge</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Increased well-being</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Increased communication skills</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Increased leadership skills</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Increased connection to wild places</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Increased respect for environment</td> <td></td> <td>100.0 0%</td> </tr> </table>	1	Increased confidence		100.0 0%	2	Increased environmental knowledge		100.0 0%	3	Increased well-being		100.0 0%	4	Increased communication skills		100.0 0%	5	Increased leadership skills		100.0 0%	6	Increased connection to wild places		100.0 0%	7	Increased respect for environment		100.0 0%
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<p>Volunteer time</p>	<p>The young people all volunteered their time, plus 5 scout leaders volunteered to be involved in the project.</p>																												
<p>Donations in kind</p>	<p>Belfast City Council provided members of staff to help plant the hedgerows.</p>																												
<p>Any changes?</p>	<p>N/A</p>																												
<p>Any future recommendations?</p>	<p>N/A</p>																												
<p>10year maintenance</p>	<p>The schools and scouts are committed to maintaining the improvements made to their school grounds. They will be caring for their perennial plants over the winter and furthermore we will be revisiting the school later in the year to give them a lesson on pruning fruit trees.</p>																												
<p>Who involved?</p>	<p>BHP/OBF, Belfast City Council, pupils, teachers, caretakers, scout leaders.</p>																												
<p>Feedback obtained</p>	<p>“The planting of the hedge made the boys aware of how to plant hedgerow plants, a skill they had never come across in the city environment. The boys felt a great sense of pride in their work & the fact that they have left a positive mark on their school landscape. Their confidence increased as they had achieved something very positive and had hard evidence of this. Such evidence is not always immediately available to pupils in the classroom. Jo was excellent at her jobs and engaged confidently with all our pupils.”</p> <p>“The Growing Space project involved 10 pupils from Year 10. Only one had any experience of growing plants. The rest are novices, several living in homes with no gardens. The project totally changed the boy's attitudes towards their outdoor environment. They suddenly became aware of the value of leaves and twigs which they previously saw as litter. Recognising that these could be homes for creatures, and we could help protect them made the boys realise that they had a part to play in their local environment.</p> <p>Building the raised beds awakened an interest in what they could grow, how they would prepare the plants and maintain them. They are very excited to</p>																												

	<p>get planting. Winning the WBPB Environmental award has increased their drive to make the growing space work. The recognition has enhanced their pride in their environment and driven them to engage more readily in their local environment.”</p> <p>Mary Murray St Mary’s CBGS</p> <p>This project gave 30 KS3 students and 10 KS5 students the opportunity to work together to create a space to promote biodiversity in the College. The younger students enjoyed the chance to work outside the classroom as part of a large group through this hands-on, muddy activity. Their coordination and communication skills were definitely enhanced through this project as was their knowledge of the natural world. The older students were given a valuable leadership/mentoring role and really developed their interpersonal skills as they encouraged and inspired the Year 8 and 9 students during the planting. The project also gave a student teacher first-hand experience of outdoor learning as the group were instructed by Jo on the importance of health and safety and how the trees/hedge would provide food and shelter for a range of animals. This activity resulted in the formation of the biodiversity team. The team are now planning how to regenerate the veg patch/herb garden to compliment the fruit grown in the orchard and hope to plant a wildflower meadow next year. The team has also made links with our technology department to make some bird boxes for the wildlife area to further promote biodiversity. This could not have been done without the support and encouragement of Jo and the Belfast Hills Partnership. Thank you so much Jo! Lisa McCluskey, Our Lady & St Patrick’s College</p> <p>“Our troop took part in all aspects of this award. They all learned how to work together and share the experience of the different tasks involved. They learned things like using tools. Appreciating other people’s input with the tasks. They learned to work as a team for the maximum impact. The particularly changed their views on protecting the environment and clean up litter afterwards, also the pollination of certain plants and flowers. Appreciating the different plant species and the feeling of taking part in something that can make a small difference. As a result of this project some of the kids are starting an anti-litter campaign in their schools and we hope to continue our litter pick up on an annual basis.</p> <p>Basically the kids are more aware of their surroundings and appreciate the impact we all have in the world. They learned to be more responsible for their actions. We loved working with Jo, she loves her job and inspires the kids so much, they just love working with her. They also love the elements working together like planting and lifting litter and most of all getting dirty!! Ian Fleck, Scout leader 6th Belfast</p>
Publicity	BHP website, social media, School’s website and social media.





Project	2.3 Getting Out There Discover & Explore <i>John Muir Award & Orienteering</i>																																																																																										
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																																																																																										
Aims & objectives	<p>The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme, focused on wild places. It supports young people to connect with, enjoy and care for nature, landscape, and the natural environment – wild places. It does this through a structured yet adaptable scheme. Four Challenges are at the heart of the award. They are designed to promote a holistic approach – including awareness, understanding, and action – and reflect John Muir’s wilderness experiences. These challenges are to Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share wild places.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of this project were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage young people to explore and discover the Belfast Hills habitats right on their doorstep. • Empower young people to gain new skills and knowledge that may contribute to their future employability. • Encourage young people and local communities to value and protect their natural, built heritage and cultural environment. • Create new audiences and ambassadors for the future protection and management of the hills 																																																																																										
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 498 young people have completed the John Muir Award • Greater use of the Belfast Hills by local schools • Greater appreciation of the resources that the hills offer for recreation. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>School</th> <th>No.Pupils</th> <th>No.Hours</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>April 2016</td><td>Christian Brothers’ School</td><td>23</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2016</td><td>St Gerard’s School</td><td>14</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept 2016</td><td>Christian Brothers’ School</td><td>71</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan 2017</td><td>St Gerard’s School</td><td>14</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb 2017</td><td>Boys Model (orienteering)</td><td>23</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>April 2017</td><td>Longstone School</td><td>12</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2017</td><td>Streetbeat Youth Project</td><td>15</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>June 2017</td><td>Boys Model</td><td>15</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept 2017</td><td>St Colm’s High</td><td>16</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Sept 2017</td><td>Christian Brothers’ School</td><td>108</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug 2017</td><td>St Gall’s GAC</td><td>13</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>June 2018</td><td>Edmund Rice College</td><td>16</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>June 2018</td><td>St Louise’s Comp</td><td>21</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug 2018</td><td>St Gall’s GAC</td><td>11</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct 2018</td><td>Malone College</td><td>75</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb 2019</td><td>St Gerard’s School</td><td>12</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2019</td><td>La Salle High</td><td>23</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>June 2019</td><td>Colasite Feirste</td><td>8</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug 2019</td><td>St Gall’s GAC</td><td>8</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan 2020</td><td>St Gerard’s School</td><td>12</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov 2020</td><td>St Gerard’s School</td><td>8</td><td>20</td></tr> </tbody> </table>			Date	School	No.Pupils	No.Hours	April 2016	Christian Brothers’ School	23	20	May 2016	St Gerard’s School	14	20	Sept 2016	Christian Brothers’ School	71	20	Jan 2017	St Gerard’s School	14	40	Feb 2017	Boys Model (orienteering)	23	3	April 2017	Longstone School	12	20	May 2017	Streetbeat Youth Project	15	18	June 2017	Boys Model	15	15	Sept 2017	St Colm’s High	16	20	Sept 2017	Christian Brothers’ School	108	20	Aug 2017	St Gall’s GAC	13	20	June 2018	Edmund Rice College	16	20	June 2018	St Louise’s Comp	21	20	Aug 2018	St Gall’s GAC	11	40	Oct 2018	Malone College	75	20	Feb 2019	St Gerard’s School	12	20	May 2019	La Salle High	23	20	June 2019	Colasite Feirste	8	20	Aug 2019	St Gall’s GAC	8	20	Jan 2020	St Gerard’s School	12	20	Nov 2020	St Gerard’s School	8	20
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Outcomes	<p>This has been one of the most successful OBF projects. The young people involved get the opportunity to immerse themselves in wild places and really connect with the natural world on their doorstep. The John Muir Award provides the perfect framework to engage with local young people, from socially deprived urban areas, helping them discover the wild hills that are on their doorstep. Many of our kids have never really ventured outdoors into nature, so this scheme gives them the opportunity to cultivate all the ingredients of awesome childhood memories; fun, adventure and exploration...“Parents have outlined how pupils have developed socially, how the award scheme has undoubtedly increased their personal development and how it has encouraged their awareness, understanding and responsibility of their local environment. The boys have been out walking in all weathers and often covering distances of 6 to 7 miles and, as I’m sure the parents will corroborate, they go home at the end of the day exhausted but buzzing!”</p> <p>Fionntáin McCottier, St Gerard’s Special School (Explorer Award)</p> <p>Our Youth Outreach Officer spends four full days, with the young people and thus can see the changes unfold. Changes such as increased knowledge on issues like biodiversity, river health, geology and heritage as well as developing practical conservation skills such as tree planting, meadow creation, willow weaving and river surveying. Increased confidence and fitness have been observed. The mountain rescue simulation event requires communication, decision making, teamwork and leadership. It is always the most popular event we deliver and the feedback from young people and their leaders is always exceptional.</p> <p>By visiting the Hills on several occasions, our young people have greater opportunity to develop a long-lasting connection to the natural world and hopefully become the future advocates for their local environment. For us, we get the chance to really connect with the kids and young people, understanding their needs, strengths and passions.</p> <p>Another outcome of the project is that many urban young people don’t leave their local community. This scheme encourages them to explore parts of Belfast that may be associated with other cultural backgrounds. Young people from West Belfast rarely visit the North of the city or Cave Hill and vice versa North Belfast kids don’t generally visit Divis Mountain in the west of the city. Our scheme has proved invaluable in breaking down these perceived cultural barriers and showcasing Belfast as one location for all sides of the community.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Response Percent</th> <th>Response Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Increased confidence</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Increased environmental knowledge</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Increased well-being</td> <td>71.43%</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Increased communication skills</td> <td>85.71%</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Increased leadership skills</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Increased connection to wild places</td> <td>71.43%</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Increased respect for environment</td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"></td> <td>answered</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>							Response Percent	Response Total	1	Increased confidence	100.00%	7	2	Increased environmental knowledge	100.00%	7	3	Increased well-being	71.43%	5	4	Increased communication skills	85.71%	6	5	Increased leadership skills	100.00%	7	6	Increased connection to wild places	71.43%	5	7	Increased respect for environment	100.00%	7			answered	7
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Volunteer time	Each young person involved in the project volunteers 4 days to complete the discovery award and 8 days to complete the explorer award.																																								
Donations in kind	This projects is frequently run in partnership with Belfast City Council, therefore there was significant In Kind staff and resources donated to this project.																																								

<p>Any changes?</p>	<p>We are constantly adding new activities to the programme to keep it new and exciting. Keeping the staff up to date with outdoor learning programmes is essential.</p> <p>In June 2017 a new law came out regarding mini bus licencing. Schools now have to pay approx. £800 per member of staff to obtain this licence, we have concerns that this may affect the delivery of this project as school can't get their pupils to the Hills.</p>
<p>Any future recommendations?</p>	<p><u>2016</u> If we were to repeat the art session again I would consider doing moving the art workshop to a morning session. It can be difficult to get young people to concentrate when they've been having so much fun outdoors all morning.</p> <p><u>2017</u> We have put 108 first year boys, at CBS, through their John Muir award in 2016 & 2017. This has been a significant undertaking and required a lot of time and resources from both Belfast Hills and Belfast City Council staff. The school grew from 70 to 108 pupils last year and we think that this is just too many pupils to facilitate. Next year we'd prefer to offer the award to more schools.</p> <p><u>2018</u> We have been combining the John Muir Award with the school grounds project this has been a great success and we plan to continue with this.</p> <p><u>2019</u> We have put 3 schools through the award and a youth group. We've continued our fantastic relationship with 12 pupils from St Gerard's Special School and developed a new relationship with year 10's from La Salle High. The eco club from Colaiste Feirste got involved as well as St Gall's GAC U12's.</p> <p><u>2020</u> Another 12 young people from St Gerard's Special School completed the John Muir Discovery Award this year...</p>
<p>10year maintenance</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Who involved?</p>	<p>BHP/OBF, volunteers, local schools, Street Beat Youth Project, Belfast City Council, John Muir Trust, Opal</p>
<p>Feedback obtained</p>	<p>Feedback questionnaires were completed by teachers from each school, and by the end of their journey together they have really bonded as a group; the kids have a great relationship with the Hills, wildlife and Jo and are truly sad to see the project come to an end.</p> <p><i>"Many of our pupils had never been to these locations before even though they are on their doorstep. Even during the completion of the Award pupils were telling me had visited Black mountain and Cavehill with their families. Hopefully they are also less likely to litter in these and their local areas in general". Chris Smyth Glen Road CBS</i></p> <p><i>"This was an amazing experience; the boys say they will remember it forever. Cave Hill was brilliant and the leaders were all super. I cannot say how much the pupils enjoyed their experience. They have improved in every area. All boys got involved in all aspects of the course. All the leaders were experts and taught me so much. They were brilliant with my special needs class". Dermot Niblock, St Gerards Special School.</i></p>

“Class 10B have just completed their second year of the John Muir Award, an environmental award scheme focused on wild places on our doorstep. Last year they completed the 'Discovery Award'. This year they have been presented with their 'Explorer Award'.

*The activities that the boys have been involved in have helped them to learn in a practical way outside the classroom, in a constantly changing environment that challenges them in a way that cannot be delivered in a school setting. The pupils absolutely loved the interaction and attention that they received from Jo Boylan from the Belfast Hill's Partnership, Michael Culbert from Belfast City Parks and the team. They deliver a programme that takes into consideration the needs of our pupils.” **Fionntáin McCottier, St Gerard's Special School Explorer Award.***

“Our pupils really benefitted from taking part in the John Muir award with Jo. They've had the opportunity to develop the skills that we hoped they would gain but perhaps, more importantly, their enthusiasm for the program shone through and was evident to anybody they spoke to about their experiences. Pupils who found it more difficult to engage, with their work in school, had the opportunity to excel when rescuing the pilot from Divis mountain or planting the edible hedge in the school garden. Others excelled with their garden designs and presentations that were incorporated into the plan. For some, the physical challenge of completing the hikes was an achievement in itself.

The pupils worked well as a team, encouraging each other to complete the tasks. Their perseverance, particularly on the mountain rescue task, surpassed expectation and we were very proud of the pupil's efforts.

The pupils' knowledge of the Belfast hills and its wildlife was greatly enhanced through the experience. The pupils live in a built-up urban area and many of our pupils would have limited experience of wild areas. They may recognise these areas nearby but needed help to appreciate the hidden secrets and importance of these spaces. Before participating in the John Muir award some of the pupils knew very little about nature, things that most of us take for granted. The pupils were fascinated by the interesting pieces of information they gained on the hikes. They particularly loved the hike up Cave Hill; they were blown away by the view from the top, none of our pupils had been there before.

All the pupils gained a greater appreciation of our local, wild places. A few of our pupils have completely changed the way they think about the environment. One pupil in particular, who had a very negative view of the environment and the need to look after it, really benefitted from the program. By the end, he was one of the most engaged students. Pupils have discussed how they hope to go back up Divis with their families and why it is important not to litter.

*I think the award itself and the way it was delivered were fantastic. We are delighted that our pupils had the opportunity to take part in the program. Jo and the other members of staff from the Belfast Hills partnership worked really well with our young people, encouraging them and challenging them in just the right measure. **Clare McLoughlin St Colm's High, 2017***

I wanted my students to have an appreciation for the real world applications of geography. In addition I wanted to foster a respect for their local

environments and community by encouraging a sense of ownership of their school grounds. Finally and most importantly I want to boost their confidence.

My students gained more than I could ever have hoped for. They gained a lot of knowledge about their local community through nature walks and working in the garden. They got to apply their map reading skills in their trek through the Belfast Hills. They learnt how to work in teams and thanks to the wonderful Jo, they took on leadership roles within teams which is really hard for them to achieve.

*Students have a greater understanding of what is right on their doorstep. Thanks to Belfast Hills Partnership they also have a greater understanding of the role that the natural world has to play within the community. Students have also gained a respect for wild places and the animals that live there. Great examples of this can be seen through how students now react to wild animals. **Lee Kelly, St Louise's Comprehensive, 2018***

*"I hoped that through this project the boys would connect with nature and the outdoor environment. As a direct result of being involved they now understand and appreciate more about food, where it comes from and how to grow it. They have been given ownership of the raised flower beds and they will continue to maintain this section of the school grounds, they are delighted with this responsibility. Furthermore, they understand the importance not littering and how to care for their environment. I feel they appreciate their local environment much more". **Sinead Boyle, Edmund Rice College 2018***

*"The majority of the pupils that took part in John Muir Award had never been on the Belfast Hills. So when they were taken to places like Cave Hill and Divis Mountain the impact on them was immense. They learned many things on these days including local history, navigation; about flora and fauna how to respect the countryside and their local environment and most importantly that these places are on their doorstep and are accessible. All of the pupils have been working with the art department to produce a series of landscapes using paint, print and collage as a result of this project. The aim is to share their experience with the rest of the school. My pupils enjoyed all parts of the award, but the particular highlights were the mountain rescue and creating the orchard". **Brian Pendleton, Malone College 2018***

*I hoped that by taking part in the John Muir Award that my pupils would develop greater awareness, understanding and interest in the local wild places on their doorstep. They really connected with places like Black Mountain, Cavehill, Slievenacloy and Colin Glen and enjoyed the learning with Jo Boylan about these wild places. Almost all of them have revisited some of these places, which they had never done before and have themselves encouraged others to go with them. Recently our group made a presentation to the whole school about their John Muir Award programme and the PowerPoint they compiled for it is to be put on school website. The best bit of the award for us was getting out among our natural places in all types of weather and learning from Jo Boylan about the wonderful places all around them! **Fionntáin McCottier, St Gerard's Special School Discovery Award 2019.***

I wanted the boys to do the John Muir Award so that they would have a better understanding of the areas around the city that some of them may not have been to. Also that they would appreciate that certain activities can impact

badly on those areas and that they need to help look after them. They realised that these areas are for them to enjoy but that they are many others whose behaviour impacts on the flora and fauna in these areas to the point that they badly damaging them. They learnt that they need to look after them better. For some it has changed their views because they see that there is a lot that you can do in wild places without causing harm. For some they realised that these local areas are not so hard to get to and are enjoyable when you know what to do. We are creating a short video with images from the four days and short comments to camera from the boys who participated. This will be put on the school social media accounts. Thanks to Jo and Laura for this project.
Brendan McCarry, La Salle College, 2019

Publicity

BHP website, social media & local press, school websites and social media.



4 CityMatters
 April - June 2017

Kids Go Wild

Our parks and open spaces are our own wee nature reserves in the city. And, to help young people appreciate the outdoors, our Parks Outreach Staff are working with Belfast Hills Partnership to get young people from St Gerard's School in west Belfast to 'Go Wild' and explore their back yards.

As part of the project, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, all participants will use their exploration experience to gain the John Muir Award.

John Muir was an explorer, mountaineer, conservationist, botanist, amateur geologist and writer of distinction. This award encourages people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

So far, the children taking part in the current Go Wild programme have:

- discovered the secrets of the Belfast Hills and Half Moon Lake;
- found fascinating fossils in Colin Glen Forest; and
- performed a mountain rescue expedition on Divis Mountain.

Jo Boylan, Youth Outreach Officer with the Belfast Hills Partnership said: "Taking part in the John Muir Award has been an amazing experience for everyone, not simply helping the young people to appreciate their local wild spaces, but also learning valuable life skills like leadership, communication and teamwork".

For more information on our parks outreach programmes call 9032 0202 go to www.belfastcity.gov.uk/parks





Project	2.3 Getting Out There <i>Go Wild Event 2016</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage young people to explore and discover the Belfast Hills habitats right on their doorstep. • Empower young people to gain new skills and knowledge that may contribute to their future employability. • Encourage young people and local communities to value and protect their natural, built heritage and cultural environment. • Create new audiences and ambassadors for the future protection and management of the hills
Outputs	<p>The Go Wild event was based at Belfast Castle and consisted of 6 different participatory activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkour • Climbing wall • Archery • Nature crafts, • Biodiversity themed digital art • Bushcraft <p>This one day event took place on Saturday 24th September 2016 and we engaged with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 young people aged 11-18 • 44 young people aged 5 -11 • 58 adults
Outcomes	<p>We engaged with 119 young people at this event (76 from our target age group). They had a great introduction to Cave Hill Country Park and the wider Belfast Hills. They also had the opportunity to get active there in a variety of ways. The feedback forms suggested that the groups would be returning to the hills.</p> <p><i>“Glad to have the introduction to the area and facilities available, we will be back and thanks again for a great day” Davy Hannah 110th Scouts.</i></p> <p><i>“We had a great day despite the rain. Really enjoyed getting on the hills and finding out more about what surrounds, we will be involved in your future events” Terry McGrath, Cave Hill Youth Group.</i></p> <p>All of the feedback forms indicated that young people had increased their environmental knowledge through participation in this event.</p> <p><i>“We wanted the kids to explore new things, get a hike up Cave Hill with the rewards of the go wild event after. Each activity exceeded the leader’s expectations and each member learnt something new about themselves some e.g. proper movement techniques from Parkour, we’ve got a few new fire and wild food experts for camp, through Bushcraft, a cub overcame a fear and took part in the rock climbing and team spirit and competitiveness kicked in on the archery shootout”. Melissa Morgan</i></p> <p><i>“Many of our young people are interested in exploring the parks and hills, knowing more about wildlife and the folklore, culture and history of the hills, but it is not always easy for us as facilitators and leaders, to find resources, materials</i></p>

	<p><i>and locations, to open up more opportunities, that is why we enjoyed this event so much”.</i></p> <p>We were successful in encouraging cross community engagement as groups came from all over Belfast and beyond.</p> <p><i>“Working together in teams was a good learning opportunity, with different learning approaches and the fun of facing a challenge collectively, came together well, shown by the enthusiasm of the young people in doing bush craft and archery, in small teams”. Donald Bell, Carrickfergus youth group.</i></p>
Volunteer time	One member of the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign volunteered for the whole day.
Donations in kind	NA
Any changes?	We believe the event was successful in meeting the objectives we set at the outset. We didn't quite meet the overall target numbers, but the weather was awful (wet and windy). Other events we know of were cancelled that day due to the conditions. We were fortunate that our location was in a sheltered spot, and it wasn't dangerous, to proceed with our plans. In terms of publicity, we know a huge number of people were interested in the event, our Facebook post alone reached 9,546 people and had 64 shares. This leads us to believe the event would have more than reached our target if it hadn't been such bad weather.
Who involved?	BHP, Belfast City Council, Scouting NI, Scouting Ireland, youth groups and local families.
Feedback obtained	We chatted to all of the leaders and participants during the event, getting a really good feel for their motivations for being there and how they were experiencing the day. Furthermore, we sent feedback forms to each group after the event.
Publicity	We contacted local youth groups in the Belfast area, we also contacted to Belfast City Council Parks Outreach Officers for Norther, West, South and East to help us publicise the event. We publicised the event on our Belfast Hills Partnership website and social media pages as well as websites such as BBC things to do, NI4Kids and Visit Belfast. U105 broadcast the event on the radio.



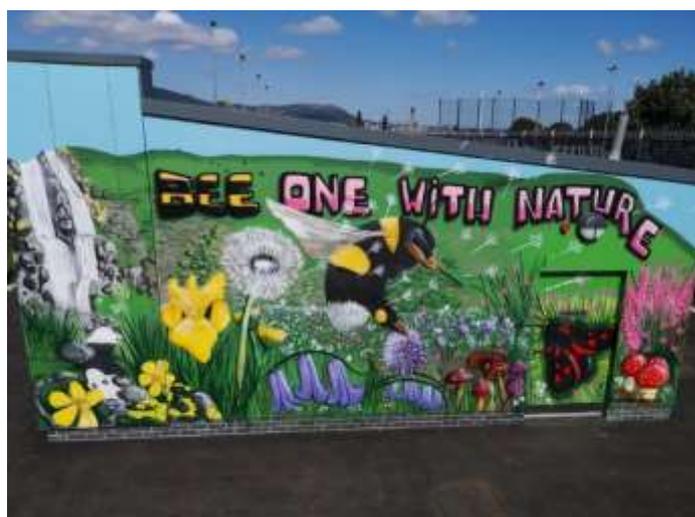
2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future

Project	2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future <i>Environmental Street Art Project</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>As part of their John Muir ‘Explorer’ Award, U14 girls from Naomh Gall G.A.C worked with local artist, Tim McCarthy, to sum up their experience of taking part in the eight day environmental award.</p> <p>The John Muir Award is an environmental scheme focused on wild places. It encourages young people to connect with, enjoy and care for nature, landscape, and the natural environment - wild places.</p> <p>The John Muir Award provides the perfect framework to engage with local young people, from socially deprived urban areas, helping them enjoy the wild hills that are on their doorstep. Many of our kids have never really ventured outdoors into nature, so this scheme gives them the opportunity to cultivate all the ingredients of awesome childhood memories; fun, adventure and exploration. Four challenges lie at the heart of the award.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover - a wild place e.g. Cave Hill 2. Explore - really get to know a wild place by exploring it in different ways e.g. orienteering or mountain rescue simulation 3. Conserve – give a little bit back by helping to conserve a wild place 4. Share – tell other people about your experiences, develop an awareness campaign <p>In order fulfil the ‘share’ element of the award. We set the girls the task of coming up with an awareness campaign, to share learning about their experience, and they came up with the idea of creating a piece of public art. The girls decided that they want to artistically represent their journey, as well as convey a strong environmental message to their local community. Some of the issues they felt strong about included protecting bees, habitat loss and planting more trees.</p> <p>By offering this learning opportunity we aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a piece of public art with a strong environmental message. ▪ Introduce topics such as habitat loss and protection of native species. ▪ Inspire young people to become passionate about their local environment and what they can do to protect it. ▪ Bring the environmental topics to life through creative arts. ▪ Provide the opportunity for young people to develop new creative skills. ▪ Safeguard biodiversity for future generations.
Outputs	<p>The girls spent two days, at Belfast Hills Partnership Offices, working on a message that they wished to share with their local community. They hoped that by creating this artwork, they would inspire local people to think about nature and their impact on it. The girls explored their own connection to the natural world through numerous treks, camps and conservation projects in the Belfast Hills and Belfast Parks with Michael Culbert, Outreach Manager, for Belfast City Council (West) and Jo Boylan, Youth Development Officer, for</p>

	<p>Belfast Hills Partnership. The young people hoped to challenge perceptions to wildlife through a mural project in Falls Park.</p> <p>Outputs Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeant art piece in Falls Park encouraging people to “Bee one with nature” • 7 days exploring Belfast Hills, 2 half day ideas workshops and 3 days working with artist on mural piece. • 12 young people immediately engaged in a project themed around biodiversity, exploration and discovering natural heritage. • Greater awareness of environmental/biodiversity issues. • Time-lapse film recorded of the mural being created
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Parents were asked about the changes they had observed in their children as a result of the project, the results of which are below:</p>  <p>Interpersonal Skills (parents comments)</p> <p><i>“The girls have gone from a group of individuals to a team of friends. They have had great experiences this summer doing activities that most young people will never get the chance to. It has increased my daughter's self-confidence, independence and interpersonal skills. I think she has made memories and friendships for life”.</i></p> <p><i>“She really enjoyed it. She loved being outside exploring nature at its best. She felt less stressed and got fitter. Her friendships have grew stronger and she appreciated being part of the team”.</i></p> <p>Environmental Skills (parents comments)</p> <p><i>“This scheme has opened my child’s mind to the prospect of working in the environmental education sector whilst also embedding in her the appreciation of our own wild places and the notion while thinking global we have to act local.</i></p> <p><i>“She has become much more aware of the world around her and how her actions impact on it. Much more inclined to recycle now and understands that the best way to deal with insects is to move them on rather than hit them with something heavy!”</i></p> <p><i>“Erin has definitely taken on board everything she was taught, when we were on our holidays she was able to tell us different names of flowers she came across and was definitely more in touch with nature”</i></p>

	<p><i>“She is more aware that we can survive in wild places without technology and other modern day comforts. She is more aware of how the environment needs our help and that we can enjoy the beauty of nature for free”.</i></p> <p><u>Street Art Project (parents comments)</u></p> <p><i>“Aobh was extremely excited about this. She enjoyed painting and putting her mark on something and has told and showed everyone. Proud as punch”.</i></p> <p><i>“The mural the girls have created came from ideas that they put together themselves based on what they had learned in the previous weeks. I think it is a fantastic reminder of what youth can achieve when they come together with a little bit of guidance. On that point I would like to state my thanks once again to Jo who supervised the girls this summer. They really loved working with her and are really looking forward to getting involved again next year”.</i></p> <p><i>“Erin loved doing the mural she was so excited and enthusiastic about doing this project, she really enjoyed using all of her creative skills to leave her mark on the mural and she was so delighted with the result”.</i></p> <p><i>“She felt it was fun, interesting and relaxing to paint. It was the first time she seen a scissor lift and she was amazed as how their ideas got put onto a big scale”.</i></p> <p><u>Quotes from the young people</u></p> <p><i>“We learnt many things about wildlife, the Hills and the environment, by taking part in this project. Some things that stand out for me include; how plants can be used for natural medicine, native animals such as the common frog, newt and lizard. We also learnt how to use spray cans to paint, which is so cool”. Holly Bone</i></p> <p><i>“During the award I’ve learnt many different trees such as the oak, ash and beech and flowers such as Irish bluebells, buttercups and foxgloves”. Mia Maguire</i></p> <p><i>“Because of the John Muir Award I feel like I’m much more confident at speaking my own opinion, I had never been part of an ideas workshop before and never had the chance to be in control of a project. I feel that I am also better at listening and working as a team”. Mia Maguire</i></p>
Volunteer time	12 young people from Naomh Gall G.A.C volunteered their summer time to be part of this project.
Donations in kind	Belfast City Council Parks enabled the art piece to be created in their park and provided support and supervision during this project.
Any changes?	No, I think this project ran like clockwork and achieved all the outcomes that we had hoped for. I am beyond proud of the girls’ achievements!
Any future recommendations?	We asked four different artists for quotes for this project. Two of the artists were unable to complete the project in our timescale due to other commitments. I would be keen to work with some of them on another project. Emic and Friz have equally amazing styles and it would be interesting to see what they came up with for the Hills.
Future maintenance	Belfast City Council will paint the mural with anti-graffiti paint to ensure that it is preserved.

<p>Who involved?</p>	<p>BHP/OBF, Harbour Commission, Belfast City Council, Naomh Gall G.A.C, Tim McCarthy</p>
<p>Feedback obtained</p>	<p>Some comments from member of the public included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“The mural is very well thought out, the colour scheme is beautiful and it really brightens up the park. I know bees have been in trouble so it’s great to see young people taking responsibility and looking after their community and the environment”.</i> ▪ <i>“It’s just lovely it puts a smile on my face when I walk around the corner and see it”.</i> ▪ <i>“It makes you think about nature, I recognise some of the flowers and the waterfall from being a kid and taking walks up the Mountain Loney”.</i> ▪ <i>It’s very colourful and nature orientated, brilliant that young people came up with it themselves, they did a good job, it’s absolutely lovely.</i> <p>Michael Culbert, Outreach Manager, for Belfast City Council (West) commented that: <i>“The mural project in Falls Park and the wider John Muir Award should be used as a model of what the youth of today can achieve. From a Belfast City Council viewpoint, it was great to be involved, our outreach staff and our park wardens, worked so well with this group of young leaders. In our parks especially in West Belfast BCC want our young citizens to use these spaces as places of positive learning, living and laughing together and through this project we were very successful and look forward to a full summer again in 2019”.</i></p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>Press release, social media release, time-lapse video on social media, Naomh Gall John Muir video created for social media and website https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqqn9mK543E</p>





Project	2.4 Salmon in the Classroom																															
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																															
Aims & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage young people to find out more about their local river and how it connects to the city, plus its importance for biodiversity and heritage in their area. This in turn will foster greater knowledge and understanding about the life of a river as it journeys through their community. To empower young people to gain new skills by learning about and improving their local environment. To encourage young people and through them residents and local communities to value and protect their natural heritage and cultural environment. 																															
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 salmon eggs delivered to schools in February. Youth Outreach Officer introduced pupils to the project, the salmon lifecycle and themes such as pollution and why we must look after our rivers. After looking after the salmon for 6 weeks, pupils released the salmon fry into the River. The pupils carried out some kick sampling to catch freshwater invertebrates. This helped explain what other species live in the River, and also showed them at first hand, what the salmon will be eating. All of the aquatic invertebrates that the school children collected were brought to school for further investigation. The school received weekly visits from Jo, who checked on the salmon throughout the duration of the project. <p>Each schools received</p> <p>2 x Salmon in the classroom introduction workshop 6 x Salmon in the classroom check-up visits to schools 1 x release day with the participating school 1 x Invertebrate investigation session</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>School</th> <th>Pupils</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>Ballymacward PS – Colin River</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017</td> <td>Oakwood PS – Derriaghy River</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017</td> <td>St Colm's High – Derriaghy River</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>Abbey Community High - Ballymartin</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>Hazelwood College – Ballymartin River</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>Fort Hill College – Derriaghy River</td> <td>119</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>Friends School Lisburn – Derriaghy River</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>Rathmore Grammar School</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>St.Marys Grammar School</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Year	School	Pupils	2016	Ballymacward PS – Colin River	19	2017	Oakwood PS – Derriaghy River	30	2017	St Colm's High – Derriaghy River	58	2018	Abbey Community High - Ballymartin	19	2018	Hazelwood College – Ballymartin River	24	2019	Fort Hill College – Derriaghy River	119	2019	Friends School Lisburn – Derriaghy River	55	2020	Rathmore Grammar School	44	2020	St.Marys Grammar School	25
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Outcomes	<p>The project has been a huge success; participating schools rated their experience as excellent, and remarked how they would definitely recommend it to others. Pupils learn about the salmon lifecycle, dangers of pollution, river ecology and how to care for living things. They also developed a sense of empathy while looking after their salmon, which totally engaged and encouraged them to find out more about their local river. The students particularly mentioned that they had not realised invertebrates also lived in rivers, and by undertaking the follow-up activities, provided by the project, they were able to conduct further research into the aquatic life found in</p>																															

	Northern Irish rivers. The teachers commented that their pupils hadn't really thought about how their actions impacted on rivers before they took part in project and they believed they had become more environmentally aware as a direct result of taking part.
Volunteer time	N/A
Donations in kind	Teacher time. The salmon eggs were stripped and incubated by the Bushmills Salmon Hatchery and they don't charge us for them.
Any changes?	There are only three rivers in the Belfast Hills area that are accessible for salmon. In the future we may need to consider working with trout hatcheries and rearing trout eggs that have been stripped from local Belfast Hill's wild trout.
Any future recommendations?	We are still looking into the idea of stripping trout from wild populations so that we can carry out a trout in the classroom project.
10year maintenance	N/A
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Ballymacward Primary, BBC, St Colm's High, Oakwood Integrated PS, Bushmills Salmon Hatchery, Abbey Community High, Hazelwood Integrated College
Feedback obtained	<p>Head teacher, Brendan Sadlier, BallyMacward PS, <i>"It was a wonderful opportunity which captured the imagination of all the pupils and gave them an insight, which they would not have gained from simply reading about salmon or watching video clips. Most importantly, he said he believed that they will be more eco-friendly citizens as a result of their experiences".</i></p> <p>He also said <i>"the pupils had expressed a better understanding and greater awareness of the habitat of salmon and other creatures. Working with the Belfast Hills Partnership has educated them about the importance of organisations that protect and nurture the environment. They gained skills and knowledge in how to take care of the environment; as one pupil put it, "We need to keep the environment clean, as animal habitats are everywhere!"</i></p> <p>Maria McClean, Oakwood Integrated PS <i>"the children know so much more about their local environment. In fact – most children didn't know there were steps to the river just across the road from our school! I've noticed the children taking more of an interest in our school garden as a result of the project as they are keen to discover which creature they can find there".</i></p> <p>Clare McLoughlin St Colm's High <i>"Most students knew very little, if anything about salmon before the project. The pupils found the life cycle of the salmon fascinating. They were not aware that salmon produced eggs. They loved watching the eggs develop and were amazed at how the egg sack stayed attached and how fast the salmon fry moved. They found it hard to believe that the salmon fry would return to the river in a few years' time. They were surprised that they could survive in local streams as they thought the water would be too dirty. They were surprised at how much life was in the stream. They learnt how to recognise animals in the water samples and how to collect samples".</i></p> <p><i>"I think this is a really fabulous project; it really connects our young people, living in a large housing estate with limited biodiversity to their environment. Pupils in all classes had a great interest in the Salmon project. Students were very keen to watch the progress of the salmon. It is an exciting project and has the possibility of a long term impact as the pupils will recall in years to come their baby salmon returning to the Derriaghy river".</i></p>

*I hoped the salmon project would enable our pupils to consider the natural world more closely as most come from urban backgrounds and don't always get the chance to enjoy nature. The excitement in the classroom for those directly involved and for other classes using the room was outstanding. My pupils became really interested in and concerned for the survival of the fish. A number of pupils monitored the fish each morning before school and so really took on ownership of the project. All of them can now talk about the life cycle of the salmon. I believe it has changed their view of their local environment. One pupil whose response to any living thing is usually "yuck" offered to become our class photographer to chart the progress of the fish. This has been a wonderful experience and Jo has been a pleasure to work with. **Hilary Donnan, Hazelwood Integrated College***

*By taking part in the Salmon in the classroom project I hoped that my pupils would learn more about the biodiversity in our local area. They saw some litter and dumping at the river and were shocked by this. They now know how vital the small local rivers are. They've learnt more about lifecycles and in particular the life cycles of salmon. They know what invertebrates are in local rivers and how pollution affects this. Pupils have learned how to take kick samples and identify invertebrates. They know what invertebrates are in local rivers and how pollution affects this. We have loved this project. **Claire Breakey, Abbey Community High***

*"I hoped pupils would develop an understanding of the life cycle of the salmon and a greater appreciation for living organisms. In addition, I always think it's more real when pupils feel some responsibility and I hoped they would understand how important it is to care for the environment. They learned how to take responsibility for looking after living organisms and they learned how to determine the quality of water through species identification. I think it has certainly enhanced their understanding of the need to care for the environment. Some of the students are very pro- active and took part in the climate change demonstrations. My pupils have written an account of the project which I intend to use as a display for Open Morning and hope to have published in the school magazine. I think the pupils involved have a better understanding of the connection between a healthy environment and biodiversity. We intend to do some woodland ecology session with the Belfast Hills Partnership. Thank you so much. Jo was fabulous **Janice Reid Friends School, Lisburn***

*I hoped that by taking part in this project my pupils would develop an appreciation of the wonder of life; get some info of their local environment; amazing life cycles; opportunity to observe development; opportunity to sample a stream for biotic and abiotic factors; enrichment of curriculum and fun I feel that the salmon project delivered on all of this aspects and more. Many of the pupils really cared about the salmon and have a better understanding of the need to protect their habitats. We had an amazing learning experience and Jo very quickly bonded with our pupils and sparked an interest in them. Pupils increased confidence by trying new things e.g. kick sampling - one boy with several communication issues really excelled in pushing himself to try this. Also, all had a chance to visit the Derriaghy river and in so doing connected with a local wild space, whilst appreciating the need to look after it. Would really love to work with the Belfast Hills Partnership again. **Alan Richardson, Fort Hill College, Lisburn***

	<p>“I hoped that the students would gain an appreciation of local ecology and conservation projects and gain a better understating of life cycles, especially, of the Atlantic salmon. They learned about all of this and more, including salmon dissection, water sampling techniques, survey work and the identification of freshwater invertebrates. The project has engaged the pupils imagination and they are discussing other environmental issues more frequently during our ecology classroom sessions. Having the opportunity to get out of the classroom and visit the Colin River with BHP really brought the project to life and releasing the salmon at the end of the 6 weeks was a great way to finish. We would love to be part of this project or similar in the future and maybe have even more science classes involved.” - Patrick O'Hagan, Rathmore Grammar School. Belfast</p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>BHP website, social media & local press, the BBC News covered the story and used it to promote the launch the OBF project on both morning and evening news.</p>



Project	2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future <i>Trout Animation Project</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>We wanted to give local young people the opportunity to discover and explore their place in the landscape and environment of Belfast and its hills, through a digital media art project. We wanted to deliver several sessions exploring biodiversity, river health and waste, showing how these linked to young people today. We endeavoured to inspire debate and critical thinking about sustainable, greener shared futures for Belfast.</p> <p>By offering this learning opportunity to schools or youth groups we will aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce a short film about protecting the local environment that can be used as a tool when engaging with other school groups (BHP works with over 2000 young people every year). ▪ Introduce topics such as waste, pollution and biodiversity. ▪ Inspire young people to become passionate about their local environment and what they can do to protect it. ▪ Reduce littering and dumping – so much of which gets washed into rivers and flows into Belfast Lough, affecting Belfast’s Harbour both aesthetically and for wildlife ▪ Bring the environmental topics to life through creative engagement. ▪ Provide the opportunity for young people to develop new skills in digital literacy, animation and film production. ▪ Safeguard biodiversity for future generations. ▪ Provide the opportunity for cross-community engagement with local young people about a common theme.
Outputs	<p>We delivered this project with year 8’s from Lagan College, an integrated, cross-community school. We met during their weekly art class. The project began with a presentation on the Belfast Hills, its rivers and biodiversity. We then introduced more complex topics such as lifecycles, food webs, river health and human impact. The sessions were completely interactive and the young people were encouraged to debate and think critically about each topic feeding back their thoughts and opinions.</p> <p>Equipped with this new information, the next step of the project was to come up with a storyboard. Jenny, from Can Do Academy, worked with the young people, helping them to create a story using the trout and its lifecycle and a medium for explaining the impact of humans on local species and rivers.</p> <p>The class then received tuition, on using watercolours, which they put into action by painting the scenes of the story (42 shots)! By this stage we had reached the half way point in the project and with the scenery complete it was time to animate.</p> <p>Joel Simon introduced the young people to the world of animation, with his twenty years’ experience working in the industry; he had a wealth of knowledge to share. He was able to inspire the class, by showing his own creations which included work for CBBC, Comic Relief, Sesame Street and Channel 4. During the subsequent weeks Joel worked with the class making each scene come to life, using ipads and a Stop-motion animation app. Joel</p>

	<p>was meticulous about the standard of work and encouraged each pupil to reach their full potential and create a smoothly animated clip.</p> <p><u>Outputs Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 week education project with Lagan College. • 20 young people immediately engaged in a project themed around waste and human impact on local rivers. • 1,290 pupils from wider school will be shown the film in assembly. • Greater awareness of environmental issues. • Greater appreciation of local rivers flowing through Belfast. • 100 people invited to project launch. • Film produced to be used as an educational resource for future rivers awareness campaigns and programmes with the Our Bright Future Project and wider Belfast Hill’s community engagement campaign. • Evaluation film produced.
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The young people involved in the project had the opportunity to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. Their teacher commented that the young people had increased their confidence, self-esteem and project management skills. The young people themselves highlighted how the project had increased their understanding of biodiversity and increased their environmental awareness. They also commented on how they had developed their confidence and digital literacy by learning with a professional animator.</p> <p><u>Environmental Awareness</u></p> <p><i>“We learned about the trout lifecycle and how they reproduce. We’ve also learned about pollution and how it is killing animals, because of unwanted waste flowing into the rivers and oceans”.</i></p> <p><i>“I have learned that we really need to look after our wildlife, like the brown trout, because they are living things like us. People are throwing plastic bottles and other rubbish into the river without thinking that it’s a home to other living things”.</i></p> <p><i>“I have learned that we really need to save the environment now, because if we don’t we might not have it and that would be sad, as it’s very pretty”.</i></p> <p><u>Digital Literacy</u></p> <p><i>“I’ve learned to be more confident in the things that I do. I’ve found that it’s a lot of fun to design things and then make them into animation”.</i></p> <p><i>“I have learned how to animate, how to work better together as a team, create storyboards and scenes and of course stop motion”.</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve learned how to use an animation app and how to make it look realistic, as it goes along. When we started, our fish moved in big bunches and Joel taught us how to make it move using slow movements and it really looked like a fish swimming”.</i></p>
<p>Volunteer time</p>	<p>20 young people from Lagan College volunteered their time to make this film.</p>
<p>Donations in kind</p>	<p>Two teachers from the school dedicated time to this project ensuring that the environmental learning outcomes were delivered to the whole of year 8. Each week they set homework that complemented the project leaning e.g. drawing the lifecycle of the trout, drawing details images of fish and anatomical sketches of aquatic invertebrates.</p>

	<i>"The art department has adapted their scheme for the whole year group and are using this knowledge to educate the year group and produce work related to the importance of looking after our hills and streams". Gillian Cooke, Art Dept, Lagan College</i>
Any changes?	No, I think this project ran like clockwork and achieved all outcomes that we had hoped for. I'd be keen to repeat it with another topic and another school.
Any future recommendations?	We asked four different companies for quotes for this project, three returned a tender. BNL Productions provided us with the most comprehensive and impressive tender and thus was awarded the job. BNL sub-contracted Can Do Academy to complete the engagement part of the project. I think in future I would send a tender request straight to Can Do Academy as part of the procurement process.
Future maintenance	We plan to roll this film out to local school and community groups as part of our wider Belfast Hills, community engagement plan.
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Harbour Commission, BNL productions, Can Do Academy,
Feedback obtained	<p>Feedback questionnaires were completed by the art department, we also asked to young people to evaluate themselves, by providing them with ipads and asking them to interview on another about what they had learned and what they enjoyed about the project. The answers were then edited into a short film. Please see associated media file.</p> <p>Some of the teacher's comment were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I hoped that my pupils would learn how to animate and realise that art can be a great tool to share a message about their environment and their impact on it. ▪ I think the project has changed their view on the environment, because at the end of each lesson, as a summary, we chatted about the human impact on wildlife and the environment. ▪ Individual students have gained confidence in sharing their ideas with others. They learned how to use stop motion app and create part of an animation. An important experience which the project gave them was that they had to repeat and perfect their work many times. This is invaluable for our subject. ▪ It was invaluable to have Can Do Academy assisting us in the project, Joel's experience in the world of animation and Jenny's warm approach with the young people, brought the best out in them. Jo and the team worked well together and Jo's approach with the young people was excellent. It was great to have them work with us for 8 weeks.
Publicity	We have been updating our social media with Belfast Harbour Commission with news about the project as it has unfolded; however, we will be having an official launch of the film on Wednesday 24 th January. We will be inviting local media and press to the event and working in conjunction with funders PR team to produce a press release. We will promote the film through BHP website and social media, as well as showing it to local school and community groups as part of our wider community engagement plan.



Project	2.5 WONDERFUL WILDFLOWERS																																																																																																											
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																																																																																																											
Aims & objectives	<p>The aims of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To empower young people to gain new skills by improving their local environment. To make significant change in the quality of the Belfast Hills urban fringe and rural areas by improving the condition of grasslands for the benefit of biodiversity in particular pollinating insects e.g. bees and butterflies. To catalyse change led by young people, by investing in both the direct improvement of the environment and the development of young people. To encourage young people to increase their knowledge and develop new skills that will enhance their future employability. To create a sustainable source of wildflower seeds. 																																																																																																											
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returned to area to survey how the biodiversity had changed by creating this new habitat.

2017 - Trial Polli:Nation plot (Fleming Fulton School)

Students learned about pollinators. We carried out the experiment below using 1m x 1m plots in the school grounds.

Control Quadrat Maintain the area as normal i.e. cut as normal	Natural Species Present Leave this area alone, do not cut or seed with wildflowers.	Wildflower Plugs Improve this area by planting native wildflower plugs.	Wildflower Seeds Maintain the area as a meadow, cut and lift at end of flowering season.
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2017

4 mini-meadows workshops

During the mini meadow project, we engaged with four local primary schools. Our Youth Outreach Officer delivered a session on the habitats, pollinators and the biodiversity of meadows. Each young person had the opportunity to get creative and decorate a plant pot, using decoupage, which they then used to create their mini meadows. They were then encouraged to plant them out in their school grounds, or in the gardens at home.

Community space meadow sown at Valley Park

In a follow on session from 'mini meadows', the young people from Glengormley Integrated, were involved in sowing a native seed wildflower meadow in their local amenity park (Valley Park), with the Belfast Hills boundary.

Small meadow created (St Colm's High)

As part of their John Muir Award, year 9's from St Colm's High created a 28m² meadow in their school grounds.

Small meadow created (St Gerard's)

Year 9 pupils from St Gerard's received a lesson on pollinators and biodiversity and then planted wildflowers into a 10m² bed, which they had prepared, in their school grounds. They bought their own good quality top soil and really enjoyed using the rolled to trample down the seed.

Pollinator Patch (Oakwood Integrated)

The P7's at Oakwood integrated received a lesson on the importance of pollinators, what the world would be like without them and what we can do to help them. The class then planted bulbs for early emerging bees and pollinators and created a small raised meadow area 16m², which they've called their pollinator patch.

2018

5 mini-meadows workshops

During the mini meadow project, we engaged with five local primary schools. Our Youth Outreach Officer delivered a session on the habitats, pollinators and the biodiversity of meadows. Each young person had the opportunity to get creative and decorate a plant pot, using decoupage, which they then used to create their mini meadows. This year we also made fun little animal pots from recycled plastic bottles. Pupils were then encouraged to plant them out in their school grounds, or in the gardens at home.

	<p>2019</p> <p>4 mini-meadows workshops</p> <p>During the mini meadow project, we engaged with four local primary schools. Our Youth Outreach Officer delivered a session on the habitats, pollinators and the biodiversity of meadows. This year in order to be more sustainable we decided not to employ an artist and we made the little animal pots from recycled plastic bottles. Pupils were then encouraged to plant them out in their school grounds, or in the gardens at home. We sourced all of the material from the Play Resource Centre and volunteers, cut the bottles and sprayed the different colours. Laura Shiels, QUB placement student, assisted Jo with this project.</p> <p>Sowing native wildflower seeds to be planted in Hills</p> <p>The eco-committee for Coláiste Feirste, as part of their John Muir Award, planted native seeds, ragged robin and red campion. The seeds were purchased from True Harvest Seeds, who hand harvest native seeds locally. Jo delivered a session on the importance of native wildflowers and pollinators in the Hills.</p> <p>The eco-committee will plant these seeds in the Hills as part of their John Muir Award explore and conserve mission.</p> <p>Community Meadow at Whiterock</p> <p>P7 pupils, from Bunscoil An Tsleibhe Dhuibh, were involved in the creation of a 300m² wildflower meadow in partnership with Belfast City Council. The pupils received a lesson on the importance of pollinators, what the world would be like without them and what we can do to help them. The class then sowed the seed for the meadow in May. They returned to the project again in June to interplant with oxeye daisies. Horticulture pupils from, St Gerard's School, visited the meadow in October to cut and rake the meadow and to dig out any weeds such as docks.</p>																														
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The young people involved in the project increased their knowledge of native plants and pollinator species, learning why native plants are important for biodiversity. They discovered how to create pollinator friendly areas in their school grounds and how to conduct a species survey. Furthermore, the project gave them practical skills e.g. using tools and learning seasonal timescales for planting.</p> <p>Teachers involved in the mini meadows projects in 2017 -2018 commented that many of the pupils had developed in the following areas:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 1574 1461 2063"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Response Percent</th> <th>Response Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Increased confidence</td> <td></td> <td>40.00 %</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Increased environmental knowledge</td> <td></td> <td>100.00 %</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Increased well-being</td> <td></td> <td>10.00 %</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Increased communication skills</td> <td></td> <td>30.00 %</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Increased leadership skills</td> <td></td> <td>0.00 %</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Response Percent	Response Total	1	Increased confidence		40.00 %	4	2	Increased environmental knowledge		100.00 %	10	3	Increased well-being		10.00 %	1	4	Increased communication skills		30.00 %	3	5	Increased leadership skills		0.00 %	0
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5	Increased leadership skills		0.00 %	0																											

	6	Increased connection to wild places		60.00 %	6
	7	Increased respect for environment		80.00 %	8
Volunteer time	N/A				
Donations in kind	Teachers helped with the planning and delivery of this project. CBS teachers helped				
Any changes?	<p>We are finding it challenging trying to get groups involved in wildflower seed collection. Schools are on holidays at the key seed collection times and summer schemes have set weeks when they meet, which don't always correlate with seed harvesting.</p> <p>We used Ecoseds high colour meadow mix seeds for the mini meadow project, which looks amazing as a wildflower meadow; However, there is a lot of grass seed amongst in the mix and we believe that a wildflower seed only mix would look better in small pots.</p> <p>The caretaker at Oakwood Integrated insisted on building a raised flower bed for the meadow. He also insisted on providing soil, and the soil he provided didn't have the ideal tilth. I think in future we would insist on preparing our own soil.</p>				
Any future recommendations?	We would like to take the pupils to visit Belfast Hills wildflower sites, to put the project into context e.g. visit a landfill restoration site or Local Nature Reserves.				
10year maintenance	The schools have committed to maintaining their new meadow areas.				
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Loanends PS, Abbot's Cross PS, Glengormley PS, Ben Madigan PS, local artist Janet Crymble, Oakwood Integrated, St Colm's High, Christian Brothers' School, Fleming Fulton School, Pond Park PS, St Colman's PS, Ballycarrickmaddy PS, Mercy PS & Christ the Redeemer PS				
Feedback obtained	<p><i>"The pupils now have an interest in the outdoors. The project was a fun, creative and interactive way to engage young learners and helped to change their views. Children are keen to water and look after their plants".</i> Mr Hyde Loanends PS, mini meadows 2017</p> <p><i>"Children were engaged throughout the activity. We had previously done some work on collages and seed dispersal, so the workshop tied in very well with the children's previous knowledge. This was unintentional, but a big positive for both Jo and myself"</i> Adam McAlister, Abbot's Cross PS, mini meadows 2017</p> <p><i>This is the type of event the children will remember in the future long after they have forgotten about angles in a triangle.</i> Philip Imgram, Ben Madigan, mini meadows 2017</p> <p><i>"As a teacher I jumped at the opportunity to have some help with the creation of a wildflower garden for our school. Jo came to my P7 room and spoke to the children about the importance of providing food for the bees – they were fascinated by this as most of them had never given it much thought. The children loved using the gardening tools and getting their hands dirty. It really allowed me to see just how capable my students are at something I would normally not attempt with them myself."</i> Mrs McKenna, Oakwood Integrated, pollinator patch 2017</p> <p>The pupils from Oakwood also commented.....</p>				

- “I liked when we got the shovels and mixed the seeds in with the soil.”
- “I liked when we planted the crocus bulbs around the trees.”
- “I liked when we did the guerrilla planting with the bulbs, you had to be really strong to pull the soil out.”
- “I liked sprinkling the seeds in the wildflower garden.”

“Our pupils learned all about pollination, plants and how to make their gardens more environmentally friendly i.e. planting wild flowers and to avoiding cutting lawns too early. They also learned the importance of protecting the bees. They are more aware of the environment and our responsibility towards it. They are more observant and are taking more notice of environmental issues. They are taking great care of the seeds they planted so that they can place them in the outdoor classroom so that they can become pollinators. The learning was educational and fun. All the children were very engaged and they loved making their little animal and insect pots for their seeds. Jo and Janet, the educators, were so enthusiastic that everyone was very excited”. **Alison Toland, St Colmans PS, Lambeg, 2018**

“The children learned a lot about protecting the environment. They enjoyed learning about the important role of insects and plants. They now believe that they can make a difference and they understand that everyone has a role to play in protecting the environment. The children very much enjoyed the lesson and were engaged throughout. The session catered for a range of learning styles. They enjoyed creating their personalised plant pots. Some of the pupils in my class have low self-esteem. The facilitators ensured that every child was supported and was able to create a plant pot. This enabled the children to experience success and their confidence grew as a result”. **Mags Stitt, Christ the Redeemer School, Lagmor, 2018**

“They learnt about the valuable role bees and mini beasts have to play in pollination. They also heard about the many beautiful places that are on their doorstep. They enjoyed decorating pots and planting seeds and realised that it was very easy. In school we have an eco-garden, which we will use the in spring and summer to look at nature. The children will also have the opportunity to do some gardening in school to help maintain the outside spaces. The presentation part of the visit informed the children about pollination and gave them a greater understanding of the flowers and mini beasts and the connection between them. They all felt a greater respect for bees in particular”. **Laura Scofield, Pond Park PS, Lisburn, 2018**

“By taking part in this workshop I hoped my pupils would learn about pollinators and how they can help flowers and insects in their local areas. They really enjoyed learning about all the different insects that help spread seeds and now know how important they are. They also enjoyed making their own pots and would like to make more at home. They have definitely increased their knowledge of how important insects are and how they help our environment. This was a good activity for developing their creative skills We hope to contribute to our school meadow and garden, later this year”. **Helen Prince, Abbot’s Cross PS, Newtownabbey, 2019**

My pupils learned about the importance of wildlife/insects to our environment and food chains and ecosystems. The children have been

chatting about their flowers, how they are growing and how they are looking after them. Some children have planted more for grandparents! We'd like to continue this project by Hopefully the doing some wildlife gardening this term and I hope to do more growing/gardening with future classes. I love how the project has encouraged the children to talk about growing flowers encourage each other to get out into their garden and plant flowers and the importance of bees to the environment. **Caroline Phealan, Carnmoney PS, Newtownabbey, 2019**

Publicity

BHP website, social media, schools websites and social media.



Creating Mini Meadows in St Gerard's School and St Colm's High



Project	2.6 Practical Field Skills																																						
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																																						
Aims & objectives	<p>In Northern Ireland we have lost over 50 species during the last century, with many more species and habitats in danger of disappearing, especially at the local level. In order to safeguard habitats and species for future generations it is important to educate young people about the wildlife on their doorstep.</p> <p>By offering schools the opportunity to carry out real fieldwork, young people are getting the chance to develop real life survey skills that may enhance their employability and hopefully lead to a career in the environmental sector.</p> <p>These science and geography education sessions are a fun and engaging way to learn outside the classroom. They not only teach practical survey skills, but encourage teamwork, communication and personal development. The sessions we have to offer are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to GIS and mapping ▪ Woodland Transect Investigation ▪ Freshwater Habitat Surveys ▪ Pollution Monitoring ▪ Hedgerow Survey ▪ OPAL Biodiversity Surveys <p>We hope by giving young people this valuable experience we can give them a better understanding of the environment and positive management changes inspiring them to be part of a solution and giving them confidence to feed into local action plans thus ultimately creating the green ambassadors for the future.</p> <p><u>Aims & Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage young people to explore and discover the Belfast Hills habitats right on their doorstep. • Inspire young people to become passionate about their local biodiversity and what they can do to protect it. • Empower young people to develop new skills relevant to developing their future careers, volunteering and contributing towards the green economy. • Safeguard biodiversity for future generations. 																																						
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 347 young people. <table border="1" data-bbox="544 1727 1442 2096"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Group</th> <th>Survey</th> <th>No.kids</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Feb 2018</td> <td>Colaiste Feirste</td> <td>GIS training</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apr 2018</td> <td>Colaiste Feirste</td> <td>Woodland Ecology</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apr 2018</td> <td>Colaiste Feirste</td> <td>GIS training</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apr 2018</td> <td>Ashfield Boys</td> <td>Woodland Ecology</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apr 2018</td> <td>Colaiste Feirste</td> <td>Freshwater / hedgerows</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sept 2018</td> <td>Knock High</td> <td>Woodland Ecology</td> <td>70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan 2019</td> <td>Knock High</td> <td>GIS environmental Audit</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mar 2019</td> <td>St Mary's CBGS</td> <td>GIS environmental Audit</td> <td>28</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Date	Group	Survey	No.kids	Feb 2018	Colaiste Feirste	GIS training	20	Apr 2018	Colaiste Feirste	Woodland Ecology	15	Apr 2018	Colaiste Feirste	GIS training	20	Apr 2018	Ashfield Boys	Woodland Ecology	23	Apr 2018	Colaiste Feirste	Freshwater / hedgerows	21	Sept 2018	Knock High	Woodland Ecology	70	Jan 2019	Knock High	GIS environmental Audit	25	Mar 2019	St Mary's CBGS	GIS environmental Audit	28
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	May 2019	Boys' Model	GIS environmental Audit	30																																								
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	Sept 2019	Friends School	Woodland Ecology	70																																								
	Sept 2019	Knock High	Woodland Ecology	80																																								
Outcomes	<p>The young people involved in the woodland ecology sessions have increased their knowledge of native woodland species, as well as learning about the abiotic, biotic and edaphic factor affecting woodland ecosystems.</p> <p>The pupils, who have engaged in our Geographical Information Systems sessions, have learned about GIS and why it is so important in today's world. They have carried out fieldwork using GPS enabled apps on tablets and used the data they collected to carry out an environmental audit of their school grounds. These skills are invaluable, as they are not taught as part of the curriculum and thus young people are gaining skills that they would not have access to without the Our Bright Future programme.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Resp onse Perce nt</th> <th>Resp onse Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Increased confidence</td> <td></td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Increased environmental knowledge</td> <td></td> <td>66.67%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Increased well-being</td> <td></td> <td>33.33%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Increased communication skills</td> <td></td> <td>100.00%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Increased leadership skills</td> <td></td> <td>66.67%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Increased connection to wild places</td> <td></td> <td>66.67%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Increased respect for environment</td> <td></td> <td>66.67%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>							Resp onse Perce nt	Resp onse Total	1	Increased confidence		100.00%	3	2	Increased environmental knowledge		66.67%	2	3	Increased well-being		33.33%	1	4	Increased communication skills		100.00%	3	5	Increased leadership skills		66.67%	2	6	Increased connection to wild places		66.67%	2	7	Increased respect for environment		66.67%	2
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Volunteer time	Two volunteers assisted Jo with this project. Laura Sheils and Karen Ní Mhuirí assisted with many of the woodland ecology and GIS sessions																																											
Donations in kind	N/A																																											
Any changes?	N/A																																											
Any future recommendations?	One of the teachers suggested doing a longer transect for the woodland ecology sessions.																																											
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Colaiste Feirste, Ashfield Boys High, Knock High, Newtownabbey Council, St Mary's CBGS, Belfast Boys' Model																																											
Feedback obtained	<i>"I feel this introduction to ecology workshop has changed how our pupils experience the environment. They all expressed an improved attitude towards</i>																																											

	<p><i>plants and the range of organisms found in both sites. They really enjoyed the hands on experience of being out in the field and loved the opportunity to use specialised equipment. The experience students had of actually being out in a 'wild' area and the opportunity they had of working in this environment and collecting ecological data. Jo was also fantastic, her enthusiasm and real love of the outdoors really made the experience deep and meaningful for the students and the teachers :)</i></p> <p><i>As a result of this project I have organised for the GIS survey to be carried out in the school grounds to help us develop the wildlife areas to promote biodiversity in the school. We also hope to start a Biodiversity or conservation club in the future". Lisa McCluskey, Knock High, 2018</i></p> <p><i>During this training our pupils were given the opportunity to evaluate the environment of the school grounds. This was good as they all recognised the need to improve the negatives and were able to start thinking about ways they could improve them for wildlife. They developed new ICT skills in terms of using GPS to identify an area that requires improvement in the school grounds and then being able to take that information from the tablet and placing it into Google Earth. They learned the various uses of GIS, the difference between GIS and GPS, the development of mapping/GIS skills in terms of inputting data and relating it to subject matter. The training was really fun and the kids particularly loved the treasure hunt. We are planning to work with Belfast Hills again later in the year. Rónán O Scollain, Coláiste Feirste, 2019</i></p> <p><i>The best part of the GIS training was seeing the boys' confidence increase as we worked through the task. With regards planting the hedge the best part was seeing the boys start to appreciate the work needed to create an environment suitable for wildlife. They have a much deeper understanding of the value of plants to wildlife in our school grounds and the local area. They understand the need to help protect the environment and take greater care of the environment. Mary Murray, St Mary's CBGS, 2019</i></p> <p><i>They learned how to use tablet computers to map different things within the school grounds, how to transfer this first-hand data onto a Google map of their school and then add layers to this map, using different tools within Google Earth. The boys were amazed at how much litter was in the school grounds and how wide ranging it was! As a result of this training we are hoping to get funding for a project next year looking at litter and the environment in the local area.</i></p> <p><i>The best bit was showing how data collected first hand by the students can easily be added to a program and the more layers added on. Kerry McDowell, Belfast Boys' Mode, 2019</i></p> <p><i>The pupils really enjoyed the fieldwork. It put the theory into context and the presentation given beforehand was particularly valuable in reminding pupils about sampling methods. The fieldwork matches very well to the As level specification in Biology, but also introduces many things that we don't currently teach in the classroom. Janice Reid, Friends School, 2019</i></p>
Publicity	BHP website, social media & Local press, school website and newsletter. Local council website.



Project	2.6 Conservation Skills & Volunteering																																																										
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																																																										
Aims & objectives	<p>Volunteers are crucial to the work of Belfast Hills Partnership. Volunteers enable us to manage great swathes wild places, run projects that safeguard habitats and species for future generations and educate people both young and old about the wildlife on their doorstep.</p> <p>Conservation volunteering provides young people with the opportunity to get involved in practical projects and take action to improve their local environment. The Hills comprise a mosaic of different habitats, which will provide an excellent training ground for learning how to manage different landscapes. Young people will learn new skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland management • Tree planting • Invasive species control • Wetland management • Habitat creation • Species surveying <p><u>Aims & Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire young people to become passionate about their local environment and how to protect it. • Empower young people to develop new skills relevant to developing their future careers. • Safeguard biodiversity for future generations. 																																																										
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 265 young people. • Creation of bat boxes and bat survey • Planting of hedgerows and trees • Planting 600 trees to create a shelter belt in a community green space. (Nov 2017) • Lesson on importance of native species and protection of habitats. • 4 sessions on bat conservation in Ireland. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Group</th> <th>Task</th> <th>No.kids</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sept 2016</td> <td>St Michael's Scouts</td> <td>Bat boxes</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2016</td> <td>St Michael's Scouts</td> <td>Bat survey</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan 2017</td> <td>45th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Bat boxes</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feb 2017</td> <td>Boys Model</td> <td>Tree planting</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mar 2017</td> <td>Baha'l Faith Group</td> <td>Tree Planting</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nov 2017</td> <td>6th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Bat Boxes</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nov 2017</td> <td>St Kieran's PS</td> <td>Tree planting</td> <td>154</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mar 2018</td> <td>6th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Bat survey</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apr 2018</td> <td>6th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Bat survey</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2018</td> <td>1st J'town scouts</td> <td>Bat survey</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oct 2018</td> <td>6th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Enviro-campaign</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan 2019</td> <td>6th Belfast & J'town Scouts</td> <td>Tree planting</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17th May 2019</td> <td>6th Belfast Scouts</td> <td>Litter lift Cave Hill</td> <td>22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Date	Group	Task	No.kids	Sept 2016	St Michael's Scouts	Bat boxes	23	May 2016	St Michael's Scouts	Bat survey	23	Jan 2017	45 th Belfast Scouts	Bat boxes	12	Feb 2017	Boys Model	Tree planting	24	Mar 2017	Baha'l Faith Group	Tree Planting	5	Nov 2017	6 th Belfast Scouts	Bat Boxes	24	Nov 2017	St Kieran's PS	Tree planting	154	Mar 2018	6 th Belfast Scouts	Bat survey	12	Apr 2018	6 th Belfast Scouts	Bat survey	18	May 2018	1 st J'town scouts	Bat survey	9	Oct 2018	6 th Belfast Scouts	Enviro-campaign	22	Jan 2019	6 th Belfast & J'town Scouts	Tree planting	41	17 th May 2019	6 th Belfast Scouts	Litter lift Cave Hill	22
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	31 st May 2019	6 th Belfast scouts	Litter lift Cave Hill	21
Outcomes	<p>The young people involved in this project have increased their knowledge of native mammal and tree species. They have learned how to create native hedgerows and why native plants are important for biodiversity.</p> <p>The scout groups have had the opportunity develop survey skills. This valuable experience can give them a better understanding of the environment and positive management changes, inspiring them to be part of a solution, giving them confidence to feed into local action plans thus ultimately creating the green ambassadors for the future. These skills can be added to their record of achievements or to their CV's as proof of volunteering experience, helping them get ahead with employability.</p> <p>6th Belfast Scouts took part in a session creating an environmental awareness campaign. We explored their attitudes to the natural world and the environment and we came up with a plan of what they would like to do to help their local environment and to raise awareness of environmental issues.</p>			
Volunteer time	Scout leaders and teachers volunteered their time to organise and help plant trees. The Bahá'í Faith group all volunteered their time to plant trees at a quarry site.			
Donations in kind	Belfast City Council donated their time and 600 trees to create a shelter belt in a local community green space in Poleglass.			
Any changes?	The Excel group from the Boys Model were fairly unenthusiastic about tree planting, compared other groups I have worked with in that school. I think it would be good to offer these sessions to young people who want to be there.			
Any future recommendations?	Many of the aims and objectives associated with this project are met during the 'conserve' part of the John Muir Award. It may be an idea to offer more one off conservation volunteering sessions, however as we have previously highlighted in other projects, buses may be an issue with the new minibus licencing law.			
10year maintenance	The core BHP team have erected the bat boxes and will continue to monitor them. The trees that have been planted will be also be monitored and managed by the wider BHP or BCC team.			
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Scouting NI, Scouting Ireland, Boys Model Secondary School, Bahá'í Faith group, St Kieran's Primary			
Feedback obtained	<p><i>"I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Jo for working with our Scout Group. The construction of the bat boxes was both informative and enjoyable and it was good to see how quickly the kids learned to develop new skill such as using the tools and implements in a safe manner under her instruction. The kids and leaders thoroughly enjoyed both sessions and we look forward to working with the Belfast Hills Partnership in the near future. Please keep us informed when any other sessions become available".</i> Dominic McIlroy Sixth Belfast Scout Group, 2017.</p> <p>"Our troop took part in all aspects of this award. They all leaned how to work together and share the experience of the different tasks involved. They learned things like using tools. Appreciating other people's input with the tasks. They learned to work as a team for the maximum impact. The particularly changed their views on protecting the environment and clean up litter afterwards, also the pollination of certain plants and flowers. Appreciating the different plant species and the feeling of taking part in something that can make a small difference. As a result of this project some</p>			

	<p>of the kids are starting an anti-litter campaign in their schools and we hope to continue our litter pick up on an annual basis.</p> <p>Basically the kids are more aware of their surroundings and appreciate the impact we all have in the world. They learned to be more responsible for their actions. We loved working with Jo, she loves her job and inspires the kids so much, they just love working with her. They also love the elements working together like planting and lifting litter and most of all getting dirty!! Ian Fleck, Scout leader 6th Belfast</p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>BHP website, social media & Local press, school website and newsletter. Local council website.</p>



Project	2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future <i>Drama Project</i>
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan & John McLaughlin
Aims & objectives	<p>We wanted to give local young people the opportunity to discover and explore their ‘sense of place’ in the landscape and environment of Belfast and its hills, through creative arts drama project. We wanted to deliver several sessions exploring the issue of sustainable development and what it means to a young people living in Belfast today. We endeavoured to inspire debate and critical thinking about sustainable, greener shared futures for Belfast.</p> <p>Engaging and exciting young people about the environment remains a challenge in contemporary society. Artistic and creative approaches like drama have been shown to be an important way to deepen the emotional connections between people and places. The arts can address the emotional and imaginative connections missing in much environmental education. Drama allows for exploration in thinking of ways to solve problems. Due to the complexity of environmental problems faced in our society, drama can help those involved to think about how different stakeholders may think or feel about the same issue.</p> <p>By offering this learning opportunity to schools or youth groups we will aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide the opportunity for young people to develop new skills in researching issues, drama technique and performance. ▪ Produce a short piece of drama that can be used to influence other young people e.g. their class, year group or wider school or community. ▪ Introduce topics such as waste, climate change habitat loss or the importance of biodiversity. ▪ Inspire young people to become passionate about their local environment and what they can do to protect it. ▪ Bring the environmental topics to life through creative engagement. ▪ Safeguard biodiversity for future generations. ▪ Create a short video of the resultant project to help raise awareness with peers.
Outputs	<p>We delivered this project with a Year 9 drama class, from Dominican College, a Year 11 class in Hazelwood Integrated College and a year 8 drama class from Blessed Trinity College. Local playwright and drama facilitator, Clare McMahon, provided 6 sessions to the group and through drama techniques and discussion the girls explored the issue of sustainable development, air pollution, fly-tipping, wildfires and impacts of plastic waste on marine wildlife.</p> <p>The project started out with drama games, improvisation, team work and devising techniques. We then got the girls to discuss issues they already felt passionate about. We were surprised at the level of knowledge they already had about environmental issues. We did a session looking more in depth at sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.</p> <p>The girls were then set the task of coming up with a ‘freeze frame’, or a snap shot in time, about an environmental issue they cared about, some of the tableaux included air pollution, plastics killing our seas, deforestation and littering. These freeze frames were quick to create, but were a perfect</p>

	<p>stepping stone for creating more sophisticated drama activities and performances.</p> <p>Session three was a full day working in the drama department. Once the girls had warmed up with some games, they were split into small groups set the task of coming up with short performances about local sustainability issues. These were then performed and critiqued by the whole class. These short skits were then refined by the pupils and then, practiced, and finally performed to a year 8 audience in the lecture theatre.</p> <p>The final performance was filmed, by a professional film maker and will be shown to the whole school and shared on social media and BHP and Belfast Harbour websites</p> <p><u>Outputs Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 sessions with Year 9 pupils from Dominican College • 6 sessions with GCSE pupils from Hazelwood Integrated College • 7 sessions with Year 8 pupils from Blessed Trinity College • 67 young people immediately engaged in a project themed around sustainable development. • 162 pupils from wider school watched the final performances. • The wider school will watch the film, created of the performance. • Greater awareness of environmental issues. • Greater understanding of sustainable development and the UN global goals for 2030. • Film produced to be used as an educational resource for future environmental campaigns and programmes with the Our Bright Future Project and wider Belfast Hill’s community engagement campaign. • Project evaluation sessions carried out.
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>The young people involved in the project had the opportunity to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. They explored topics that they don’t normally cover in the school curriculum. They commented that they really liked having the opportunity to have a voice and to be armed with facts that they could share with their peers. Below are some comments from their teachers:</p> <p><i>“I hoped that by taking part in this project my pupils would have a greater understanding of the impact of global warming on the earth and also of the problems facing their local environment around Belfast Hills. I also hoped they would be able to create a piece of theatre in education to present these issues to their peers and communicate to them practical ways they can support their environment.</i></p> <p><i>My pupils gained a great sense of achievement, not only did they gain a lot of knowledge and understanding, but they felt empowered and proud of their dramatization. Many of the pupils were quite shy and they have gained so much self-confidence. Indeed one of the girls has Asperger’s and commented to her teaching assistant that she felt very proud of herself.</i></p> <p><i>I think the girls are much more aware about how they can make practical changes to their everyday lives to support the environment. They are also very passionate about sharing their knowledge and want to present their drama for the whole of year 9 at a special assembly. This will take place in January.</i></p>

We also plan to show the year 8's the video as part of their geography curriculum.

The best part of the project was seeing the enthusiasm grow within the pupils, also seeing them take ownership of the piece. They have gained so many life skills and self-confidence from working with Jo & Clare. This was a wonderful opportunity for the girls and I'm sure a high point of their year!" **Deirdre Clarke, Dominican College**

I had hoped that my pupils would gain insight into environmental issues, as well as having the opportunity to work with a local playwright. Working as part of a team improved their confidence in their performance skills. They learnt how to work with new groups of peers, how control their nerves in a performance and how to project their voices and remain in character. They have really improved their self-confidence and absolutely loved the creativity of devising scenes based around the environment. All of the students actually performed their pieces, which is very significant, as it hadn't happened prior to this project. This is a SEN group, many of which have autism, Asperger' and ADHD.

The project has made them think about dumping rubbish and recycling more. They think more the effects of plastic on the environment. They were shocked about badger baiting and how wildlife has been affected by illegal fly-tipping and river pollution.

Beyond the project, we will continue to develop the ensemble work and further devise stories about the environment, for the GCSE devised performance task. We are delighted that a video will be produced, as it will be used for future groups to develop ideas as a starting point.

The whole experience was excellent and really enjoyable. There was so much enthusiasm and energy generated due to Jo and Claire's enthusiasm and expertise. We are so grateful to have been part of this project! **Maria Robb, Hazelwood Integrated College.**

"I hoped that this project would develop their confidence and drama skills to be able to perform in front of an audience. Not only did they achieve that but they also gained invaluable knowledge about local environmental issues and how our decisions and choices impact on the local people and wildlife."

"The best part of this project were the workshops delivered by ClareMcMahon and John McLaughlin from the Belfast Hills Partnership. They engaged the pupils with a range of games and drama activities and techniques to explore the various themes. The final performance was fantastic." – **Clare Boylan, Blessed Trinity**

Evaluation Report, Clare McMahon, Drama Facilitator

This project was a real delight to work on. From collaborating with Jo and the BHP, to meeting teachers and students from three excellent schools. Together we achieved the project aims of using drama to facilitating learning and peer education to highlight environmental issues.

As a drama facilitator it is often the case that I am brought on board a project and left to work in isolation. This was such a brilliant change to be able to work

with Jo in the room and discuss how the work was going and how we could ensure, together, we got the best experience for the young people. It was really key in the success of the project, bringing environmental topics together with theatre.

Both schools were excellent, and unique. The different age groups, areas, gender, socio-economics and abilities all made for totally different interpretations and consequently varied performances. It was a wonderful project to be part of.

Process

I spent the first sessions getting to know the group, engaging in topics around the environment and triggering their creativity using factual topics. With the first school this was very creative and lots of content was generated, the second required a broader scope and we focused a lot on the process of how to devise a piece of theatre together.

The structure for the next few sessions was to focus on defining their ideas and come up with short scripts about issues they had engaged with. I then scripted their ideas and improvisations into a coherent script and included extra facts around the topics so the performance was packed full of information. These ensured learning outcomes were achieved for both the performers and their peer audiences.

Finally, I used music and sound, props and set to tie all the pieces into one large performance. For the first school this also included a large ensemble performance, for the second school a short movement piece inspired by Global Warming, which led into their individual scenes. This was to create a feeling of team-work in the group and promote the feelings of group support and investment as well as expressing the topics they were exploring in creative ways.

Two performances were filmed by a videographer who I liaised with in advance about the performances. Both groups were excited and inspired by having their work filmed.

Evaluation

The young people engaged with tricky topics which are by their nature difficult to dramatize. Their imaginations were splendid, from embodying the hills of Belfast and physicalising the weight of rubbish being dumped on them, to anthropomorphising a fish and his friends as their environment gets covered in litter. The first school even managed to tackle the tricky topic of climate change and used props of earth and wood to show how it was affecting the world.

As a facilitator I am delighted with how well they engaged and the pieces they ended with were exciting, varied and full of heart. Due to the large class sizes, it was not always possible to work with students individually. If I had more time I could have worked a little bit more on using their voices and bodies to ensure their drama techniques were as strong as their ideas. If done again I think this project would have benefited from more contact time with the students to allow their ideas to develop more organically, this would reduce the number of hours of prep time required and give a feeling ownership to the students. But this is, of course, a compromise when working with school class groups and that's not something I would change.

	<i>Overall, I think it was wonderful, innovative and inspiring to see how talented and engaged the young people were about the issues. I was particularly proud of how much the young people spoke about emotional learning. Learning how to work with different peer groups, feeling proud of presenting their work to peers, making their own characters and having ownership of the performances and with the first school in particular how much they had enjoyed drama and non-exam led work and with the second how much they had learnt about the issues they'd explored. It really was a pleasure to be part of.</i>
Volunteer time	The Teachers gave their time to help make this project work within school time.
Donations in kind	N/A
Any changes?	No, I think this project ran like clockwork and achieved all outcomes that we had hoped for. The only thing could have been more time and more opportunity to share the project beyond the classroom.
Any future recommendations?	This has been a fantastic project for creating globally aware citizens that are now green ambassadors for the environment.
Future maintenance	We plan to roll this film out to local schools and community groups as part of our wider Belfast Hills, community engagement plan.
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Harbour Commission, Clare McMahan, Lamb film productions
Feedback obtained	<p>Feedback questionnaires were completed by the Deirdre Clarke the Head of drama and they girls took part in an evaluation session. I've included some of their comments below:</p> <p><i>"I liked how everyone had the chance to say something, there was no 'main' character and we were all equal".</i></p> <p><i>"I think that it was cool that we incorporated drama and facts together. Normally, when we do drama it's only a story, but this time we performed to inform people about real facts and real life".</i></p> <p><i>"I think the drama project made the topic fun. It would have been boring if we'd just watched a PowerPoint. I liked leaning, but also having fun".</i></p> <p><i>"All my life I've liked acting, but I've always felt really shy. I don't like being in front of people, but the atmosphere of our play made me feel better and more confident to perform".</i></p> <p><i>"I liked how everyone got to play a character that they were meant for, like they actually were that character and they fit in perfectly with the scene".</i></p> <p><i>"Most plays are about adapting scenes from other books or movies, but ours was about actual issues in the world, that we wanted to let people know about, like our play had a purpose".</i></p> <p><i>"I liked it because we weren't just given a script and told to act it. We had the chance to write it ourselves and make it our own".</i></p> <p><i>"I liked how we were able to share what we'd learned with the first years".</i></p> <p><i>"I liked how we were able to create our own scripts and characters. Normally we're just given a script and told to be a character. Because we got make our</i></p>

own characters, it meant you knew that you were suited to the role and you got to express yourself by playing your character”.

“I like how there wasn’t just one or two lead people, each person got to do their own bit and decide how much they wanted to do. Some people who didn’t feel as confident were still able to contribute what they felt comfortable with”.

“I liked how it was in the middle of our exams, but it was something we could go to and have fun with that wasn’t tested. We learnt so much, but didn’t have to sit at a desk and write it all down. We were able to have loads of fun, I mean you heard us all laughing”.

“I liked how nobody felt scared or embarrassed to be involved”.

“I liked how we really got to improve our acting skills”.

“I really enjoyed the project, I loved my character. I played a mother who had no interest in recycling and who felt annoyed at people trying to inform her about waste. As a result of our project we’ve asked the school to provide more ways for us to recycle plastic. This is only the start of it, the school are going to have to continue being more green. I think that I’ve improved my acting skills, back in the day, when I was in primary school I used to be shy especially when it came to drama, but now because of the atmosphere of this play, I’ve felt so comfortable and I was able to really be my character and play my part and it felt really good”.

“Yes I felt the same I was shy in primary school too. I would have hid away and not wanted to join in, in anything. Now, I just feel more confident and that I can be myself. I also love that everyone enjoyed the play. I mean Miss Clarke, Jo, Clare and all the year 8’s all loved it. This makes me really happy and proud knowing that our hard work paid off”.

“Our Drama project was about environmental issues, in particular electronic waste and plastic going into landfill. I learned that if you recycle and look after our environment, the waste that we don’t recycle can end up on our seas. I’m going to pay a lot more attention when buy a new phone or throwing away waste. I feel like I have learned new drama skills and techniques and I definitely feel more confident about speaking out. I also feel like I’ve increased my knowledge on environmental issues in our world”.

“Our performance was about young adults who were disrespecting the environment by setting the Cave Hill on fire. I was the character who lit the fire, McKenzie. I liked the fact that we were having fun, but also raising awareness about resecting the environment. I live on Carnmoney Hill and have seen fire in the past, but I was shocked by some of the facts like how much of the land it burned and the habitats which as lost. I feel like I had the opportunity to do serious acting, because I’ve only ever done musical theatre. I feel like I’ve developed how not to be shy on stage and to share ideas, instead of keeping them to myself”.

“I became better friends with my partners and leaned how to be confident in front of others”.

	<p><i>“My play was about hill fires. I was trying to explain the danger of wildfires and the damage they cause. I liked how we could make our own decisions about what we did. The skills I’ve developed include; working well as a team, how to write a play, creating a play based on facts”.</i></p> <p><i>“Our play was about how the Earth would feel if it was a human. I spoke as if I was jealous. I liked how the Earth had multiple emotions. I liked that we got to improve our acting skills and I got to express emotions more than I usually do”.</i></p> <p><i>“The best part was learning about the environment, the importance of recycling and wildfires in the Belfast Hills. The project was amazing. So much fun!”</i></p> <p><i>I feel like I’ve learned a lot about climate change and I will definitely try to recycle more. I have learned lots of new skills and I have more confidence to talk about nature issues... and we got to perform in front of our friends”</i></p> <p><i>“I think I have more confidence and better acting skills and I know all about nature around Belfast. I loved the drama games and the teamwork.”</i></p> <p><i>I liked the drama games and group work and I’m very proud of our final performance. The best thing was learning about the environment and turning it into a play and everybody had a part that suited them.”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel like I’m more creative and I have better ideas about nature and climate change and drama. I would love to do this project again.”</i></p> <p><i>“I didn’t know there was so much plastic in the ocean and how it harms so many animals. I enjoyed learning about the environment and performing in front of the other class.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have learned a lot about nature and animals and wildfires and I’m better at working with other people in a team. I will to use less things and recycle more at home.”</i></p> <p><i>“I didn’t know there were Irish Hares living on our mountains. I have boosted my confidence in acting and I learned way more about wildlife and how we’re harming the planet. The best part was working with my friends and making up our lines for the play.”</i></p> <p><i>“I loved the games and the teamwork and how we got to use our imagination. Everybody put their own personality into their pieces. I loved learning about how to protect the environment.”</i></p> <p><i>“I really liked the drama classes with the Belfast Hills and I am more confident in acting. The experience has given me lots of new skills and I’m better at projecting my voice. I hope we can do something like this again.”</i></p>
Publicity	We plan to carry out a huge publicity drive when we have the final film.



Project	2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future <i>Living History Treasure Trail</i>																							
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan																							
Aims & objectives	<p>Through our living history treasure hunt, we aimed to engage with and inspire young people, from the hard to reach target age group of 11 - 18 year olds. Many of the groups we planned to contact were situated in areas of significant social deprivation. We hoped that by participating in this event, local youths would have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the heritage of the city in which they live. We wanted to help them interpret and understand their ancestral journey through the ages from Neolithic farmers to modern time. Our key aims and objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire young people to become passionate about their local heritage. • Encourage young people to explore and discover the rich history on their doorstep. • Empower young people to develop new skills. • Encourage young people to value and protect their built heritage and cultural environment. • Bring the past to life through living history and creative engagement. • Encourage the preservation of important heritage sites in the Belfast Hills. • To encourage greater use of Cave Hill Country Park by schools. • Increasing the ability of young folk to navigate using a map. • Promotion of healthy living. 																							
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten local schools participated in the Living History Treasure Trail. • Greater use of Cave Hill by local schools • Greater appreciation of the resources that the hills offer for heritage and recreation <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain</td> <td>39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gaelscoil Enna</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holy Trinity Primary</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ballysillan Primary</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sacred Heart Primary</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ballymacward Primary</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Marys Star of the Sea PS</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Mary's on the Hill PS</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Patricks Primary PS</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Springhill Primary PS</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>281</td> </tr> </table>		Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	39	Gaelscoil Enna	6	Holy Trinity Primary	30	Ballysillan Primary	24	Sacred Heart Primary	20	Ballymacward Primary	18	St Marys Star of the Sea PS	16	St Mary's on the Hill PS	52	St Patricks Primary PS	56	Springhill Primary PS	20	Total	281
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Total	281																							
Outcomes	<p>The project was a huge success. Young people were introduced to the heritage of Cave Hill and Belfast as well as having the opportunity to develop map reading skills. The teachers involved commented that the event had inspired their pupils to learn more about their local heritage, the history of Belfast, Belfast Castle and Cave Hill. The also commented that the children were able to connect with the nature on their doorstep. All of the schools remarked that that the characters brought the stories to life in a fun and engaging way, that was easy for young people to connect with.</p>																							
Volunteer time	4 x volunteers participated in this whole day event																							
Donations in kind	Teacher time, Volunteer created the trail																							
Any changes?	N/A																							

Any future recommendations?	If we were to repeat this event we would maybe include a few more visual clues or arrow to confirm the participating groups were in fact on the right route. Some schools suggested making it a whole day event.
10year maintenance	N/A
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, volunteers, 10 local schools,
Feedback obtained	Feedback questionnaires were completed by teachers from each school when they came back from the trail. All feedback was very positive, saying how much the young people had learnt and how they benefited from the physical activity involved in the scheme.
Publicity	BHP website, social media & local press (North Belfast News)



Project	2.6 STEM-EXPO
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan
Aims & objectives	<p>The STEM-Expo, at Belfast Castle, aimed to promote STEM subjects with local schools. By taking part in this event, young people were given the chance to participate in a wide variety of activities with the aim of encouraging more young people to understand their local environment as well as think of Science, Technology, Engineering, Geography and Maths (STEM) subjects as a possibility for future careers. Furthermore, we hoped to help local pupils appreciate their environment, understand how it works, and inspire them to become the scientists and green ambassadors for the future.</p> <p>The Belfast Hills is the perfect place to demonstrate many aspects of STEM subjects including geology, and the EXPO was a great way to give young people the chance to experience some of these for the first time. By providing these opportunities, we hoped to encourage pupils to think more about STEM subjects and how they directly relate to the world around us, not only at the present, but increasingly in the future, with key issues such as climate change and geological hazards.</p> <p><u>Aims & Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage young people to explore STEM and geography subjects for their future studies and career choices. • Inspire young people to become passionate about their local environment and how to protect it. • Empower young people to develop new skills relevant to developing their future careers. • Encourage young people to learn more about native species and thus help safeguard biodiversity for future generations.
Outputs	<p>The event provided a fantastic opportunity for young people to see STEM subjects brought to life in unusual ways and have the chance to talk to scientists and engineers from universities, colleges and leading NI science organisations about their work. It offered a world of inspiration for young people, bringing learning to life, as well as highlighting the many exciting opportunities available for young scientists in Northern Ireland. Pupils had the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities that included: discovering aquatic invertebrates as pollution indicators, finding out what meteorites can tell us about the origin of the Solar System. Exploring earth process, learning how to program LEGO Mindstorms EV3 robots using sensors and motor and also, understanding the importance of predators in our ecosystems.</p> <p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 366 young people. • Connected with 7 local schools • 2 days of activities • 12 young people, from OBF programme 1 volunteered at the event. • 8 exhibitors <p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly engaged with 300 young people. • Directly engaged with young people from secondary schools making their GCSE subject choices.

- Connected with 7 local schools
- 2 days of activities
- 6 young people, from OBF programme 1, trainee rangers
- 7 exhibitors

Exhibitors	Contact	No. Staff
Belfast Hills Partnership	Jo Boylan	2
Geological Survey NI	Kirstin Lemon	2
NMNI	Mike Simms	1
Ecomantella	Karl Hamilton	1
Ulster University	Siobhan Flynn	3
Party Professor	Clare Childs	1
Institute of Physics	Liz Conlon	1
SERC	Bennett Chandran	2
Belfast City Council	Mark Turner	1

Schools

Date	Group	No. kids
22.5.18	Ben Madigan Prep	22
22.5.18	Our Lady's 'Park Lodge'	45
22.5.18	Mercy College	60
22.5.18	Hazelwood Integrated	30
22.5.18	Our Lady & St Pats (Knock)	21
23.5.18	Trinity College	52
23.5.18	St Therese of Lisieux	58
23.5.18	Hazelwood Integrated PS	30
23.5.18	Our Lady's 'Park Lodge'	48
Total		366

STEM 2019

Date	Group	Year	No. kids
22/10/19	St Colm's High	10	23
22/10/19	Ashfield Girls' High	10	14
22/10/19	Cedar Lodge School	10	20
22/10/19	Dominican College	10	90
23/10/19	Dominican College	10	68
23/10/19	Coláiste Feirste	9	20
23/10/19	Coláiste Feirste	9	15
23/10/19	Our Lady & St Pat's Knock	9	24
23/10/19	Breda Academy	10	26
Total			300

Outcomes

The young people involved in this event were able to increase their knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of issues. They also developed many skills that are not taught in the classroom:

- Learned how to program LEGO Mindstorms EV3 robots using sensors and motors and then used coding to make them move.
- Discovered what meteorites can tell us about the origin and early days of the Solar System, about the composition of Moon and Mars,

	<p>about how they reach Earth, and the effects of the very largest meteorite impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge on using aquatic invertebrates as pollution indicators, using chemical test to look at Nitrate and phosphate level in river water samples and how to use a microscope to further investigate invertebrates. Learned key physics and chemistry principles by carrying out simple and fun experiments. Increased knowledge on earth processes such as volcanoes and earthquakes and local geological features in the Belfast Hills. Increased knowledge on native raptor species as well as learning about animal adaptation for different habitats. Pupils had the opportunity to hold animals and birds of prey. 																																													
Volunteer time	12 students from programme 1 each gave a day to help us with the event. It meant that they got first-hand experience of working with some of the best educators in the country. They were an invaluable help to the event and we may have struggled without them.																																													
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Any changes?	<p>Year 1: We decided to hold the event in May in retrospect this wasn't the best time of year, as many schools were tied up with GCSE examinations. During the event we spoke to teachers and they said November would be a much better time of year to run the event.</p> <p>Year 2: We ran the event mid-October and it was much more successful in attracting year 10 pupils, choosing the GCSE subjects.</p>																																													
Any future recommendations?	Just the time of year and to carefully think how we could tie in with OBF programme 1 as this worked really well. Some of the teachers mentioned transport as being a barrier.																																													
10year maintenance	N/A																																													
Who involved?	Year 1: BHP, QUB students, Belfast City Council, University of Ulster, South East Regional College, Ecomantella, National Museums NI, Party Professor, Institute of physics, Geological Survey NI, Ben Madigan Prep, Our Lady's 'Park																																													

	<p>Lodge', Mercy College, Hazelwood Integrated Our Lady & St Pats (Knock), Trinity College, St Therese of Lisieux</p> <p>Year 2: BHP, trainee rangers, Belfast City Council, University of Ulster, South East Regional College, Ecomantella, National Museums NI, , Institute of physics Liz Conlon, Geological Survey NI, St Colm's High, Ashfield Girls' High, Cedar Lodge, Dominican College, Colasite Feirste, Breda Academy. Our Lady & St Patricks College.</p>
<p>Feedback obtained</p>	<p>Ben Madigan, Philip Ingram <i>"The rivers session was very interesting, it was fascinating to see how chemical are affecting our rivers. I was encouraged to see women leading the session on programing and coding. This is something I hope my girls will take home with them".</i></p> <p>Park Lodge <i>"It was brilliant to see how geology could be taught through local resources i.e. Cave Hill. We loved the robotics and the idea of letting the kids build them before they programmed them. This event was very practical, all of the activities were real life and hands-on and the presenters were super enthusiastic. Hopefully our pupils can now see that physics is fun and it will encourage them to get involved in science".</i></p> <p>Our Lady & St Patrick's College <i>"The animals were fab! My class will be looking at water pollution more carefully. Pupils particularly enjoyed the earthquake demos. The kids enjoyed the hands on demos, so even the less enthusiastic enjoyed this event and may choose STEM subjects in the future".</i></p> <p>Trinity College <i>"I think this event helped increase awareness of how science can play a role in maintaining biodiversity. The students really enjoyed having the opportunity to engage in so many hands on activities. The live animals were a big hit!"</i></p> <p>St Therese of Lisieux <i>"I feel that our young people are more aware of their immediate environment. They've been given the opportunity to develop greater awareness of the diversity of species, as well as an opportunity to examine a range of rocks and look at events in nature which may affect them".</i></p> <p>Cedar Lodge <i>"It was great to see practical applications of geological phenomenon, as well as practical hands on activities. The kids were able to see how science affects everything around us in everyday life. Thoroughly enjoyable event"</i></p> <p>St Colm's High <i>"The STEM event has definitely made my pupils aware of science in the world around them and how amazing it can be when you delve a little deeper. They really enjoyed the engineering, animals and touching a real meteorite.</i></p> <p>Ashfield Girls High <i>Fantastic range of workshops that covered a wide range of STEM subjects, they were all interactive, which was essential to stimulate interest. Our girls</i></p>

	<p><i>engaged fully and this is perfect to stimulate uptake of science subjects at GCSE. Thank you for hosting, the girls thoroughly enjoyed themselves.</i></p> <p>Dominican College Belfast <i>“Pupils have thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and have had the chance to develop a greater understanding of seismology. The practical nature of the learning is fantastic; pupils thoroughly enjoyed the hands-on nature of what they were learning about. The event really stimulated interest in the main science subjects and geography. All of the activities were superb and the staff were extremely friendly and knowledgeable.</i></p> <p>Colaiste Feirste <i>“The pupils learned and were inspired very much by the geological workshops as well as the meteorites. Many of the girls also felt inspired to think about engineering as a practical area of study and learning. Pupils felt that some of the workshops opened their eyes to different subjects e.g. engineering, thanks to the University of Ulster. Each workshop was brilliant being able to learn through experiments was great”.</i></p> <p>Our Lady & St Patrick’s College <i>“I wanted our pupils to gain more of an awareness of STEM subjects and be excited about studying these at GCSE and A Level. The animals and geography was brilliant, students gained so much info on environmental issues and conservation. Many pupils commented on being excited about doing more science experiments and joining eco club”.</i></p>
<p>Publicity</p>	<p>BHP website, social media & Local press, school website and newsletter. Local council website.</p>



Project	2.6 Our Environment Past, Present & Future <i>Trash Fashion Project</i>										
Officer responsible for monitoring	Jo Boylan & Lizzy Pinkerton										
Aims & objectives	<p>The issue of fly tipping and littering is a major ongoing problem for the Belfast Hills area, with the resulting visual eyesores sending out the wrong messages to visitors. Studies have shown that where litter has been dumped, unless quickly removed, results in a lot more rubbish being thrown there. Thus creating the perception that it's ok to litter. This in turn sends out the message that this is not an important area to protect, but neglected wasteland, for throwing your rubbish into.</p> <p>We wanted to tackle this issue in an innovative and creative way and thus applied for the Community Arts Partnership's renowned 'Trash Fashion' project. We wanted give pupils the opportunity to discover and explore their place in the landscape and the environment of Belfast and its hills, helping change mind-sets of the young people, their peers and their families, as they spread the word about what they are doing. We strongly believe that young people are the future and we need to engage them in exciting ways, they can connect with, in order to create a better environment for everyone to enjoy.</p> <p>We thought that teaming up with CAP and using the arts and their expertise, as a method to engage young people, in the rather unattractive topic, would make a strong partnership and really ignite the interest of the pupils involved.</p> <p>The project explored the topic of waste and how this links to our society today. We aimed to inspire debate and critical thinking about sustainable, greener shared futures for Belfast. Through this process we helped young people deliver practical environmental action in their local community as they put out strong messages concealed in the fabric of their designs.</p> <p><u>Project aims & objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make real improvements on the ground in terms of reducing littering. ▪ Inspire young people to become passionate about protecting their local environment. ▪ Supporting young people to lead progressive change in their communities and local environment through creative engagement. ▪ Provide opportunities for young people to develop new skills arts, design and project management. ▪ Create green ambassadors for Belfast and its Hills. ▪ Empower young people to make a positive contribution to their communities through shaping and delivering their own project, contributing towards building their civic pride. <table border="1" data-bbox="571 1756 1423 2078"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 1756 991 1805">Learning Outcomes</th> <th data-bbox="991 1756 1423 1805">Social Development</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1805 991 1877">Organising skills</td> <td data-bbox="991 1805 1423 1877">Understanding and Accepting others</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1877 991 1926">Challenging values and beliefs</td> <td data-bbox="991 1877 1423 1926">Self Confidence</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1926 991 1998">Thinking, problem solving, decision making</td> <td data-bbox="991 1926 1423 1998">Friendship building and networking</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1998 991 2078">Managing a project & working to a deadline.</td> <td data-bbox="991 1998 1423 2078">Team building skills and Young people working together</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Learning Outcomes	Social Development	Organising skills	Understanding and Accepting others	Challenging values and beliefs	Self Confidence	Thinking, problem solving, decision making	Friendship building and networking	Managing a project & working to a deadline.	Team building skills and Young people working together
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	Being creative	Leadership development
	Develop identity	Communication Skills
Outputs	<p>2019</p> <p>We delivered this project with GCSE art pupils, from Malone College. Local artist and facilitator, Christine Boyle, provided 7 sessions during which the young people created designs, incorporating various elements to reflect the outstanding beauty of the Hills landscape and the threat to this by littering.</p> <p>The project started out with a session, delivered by BHP Youth Outreach Officer, looking at the issue of waste, particularly in the Belfast Hills and the impact it has on our countryside, communities and economy. The pupils then had the opportunity to plan and conceptualize designs that reflected their feelings by creating a mood board. The teacher set homework each week and encouraged afterschool classes to work on their projects.</p> <p>The materials they used included plastic bottles, bottle tops, discarded underfloor insulation, crisp bags and newspaper. The juxtaposition of nature vs man; woven together into catwalk clothing with a statement.</p> <p>The final show took place at Stormont Buildings. Community Arts Partnership organised a cat walk show with several other community organisations and youth groups, the pupils arrived at the venue and then had the opportunity to do their hair and makeup and change into their garments. The Belfast Hills project was kept at the finale to the show.</p> <p><u>Outputs Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 sessions with GCSE pupils from Malone College • 16 young people immediately engaged in a project themed around waste and fly-tipping • Fashion show at Stormont with an audience of 200 people • 300 pupils from wider school watched a special performance at Malone College junior assembly. • Greater awareness of environmental issues. • Development of skills such as project management and design. • Project evaluation sessions carried out. <p>2020</p> <p>We delivered this project with 20 girls from the Senior Section of Muckamore Girls Brigade over 7 weeks. The format was similar to the previous year, with Scheme Manager Lizzy Pinkerton working with the girls to plan their campaign messages and design their outfits accordingly.</p> <p>The final outfits and placards were modelled at the GB display in front of their family and friends, with the girls explaining what the issues they picked were important to them, and what the various aspects of their outfits represented.</p> <p><u>Outputs Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 sessions with Muckamore Girls Brigade • 20 young people immediately engaged in a project themed around waste and fly-tipping • Fashion show at the GB display with an audience of 260 people • Greater awareness of environmental issues. • Development of skills such as project management and design. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed new friendships and confidence. • Project evaluation sessions carried out.
Outcomes	<p>2019 The young people involved in the project had the opportunity to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. They explored topics that they don't normally cover in the school curriculum. They commented that they really liked having the opportunity to have a voice and to be armed with facts that they could share with their peers. Below are some comments from their teachers:</p> <p><i>Being involved in the trash fashion project has been fantastic, the pupils have learned so much about the importance of looking after their local environment and the impact of pollution. On a personal level they have bonded as a group and improved and developed their transferable skills such as communication and time management. The final show has boosted their self-confidence and morale within the group has grown The pupils will be leading an assembly, to show their designs, to inform the junior school about the issues they care about. This project has been really beneficial to our school in terms of publicity and promoting the art department within the school and community. It was an absolutely wonderful experience. Jayne McBeigh, Art Teacher Malone College</i></p> <p>2020 <i>This project has been something really different for the girls, they have all learned so much about their local environment through the process. The project also meant that they were in groups of different ages so they have gained new friends and worked really well together. All the girls really got stuck into the project, as there was something for everyone to do. It's been great fun – thank you. Carline Abbott GB leader</i></p>
Volunteer time	<p>2019 16 pupils, 2 teachers and the art technician from Malone College all volunteered their time to be part of the project. Furthermore, students from Belfast Met volunteered their time to do hair and make-up. CAP had various volunteers at the fashion show, helping the participants get dressed into their designs and to help make any last minute adjustments.</p> <p>2020 20 girls and 6 leaders all volunteered their time to be part of the project.</p>
Donations in kind	N/A
Any changes?	Due to the time constraints we were unable to get the young people into the hills to see the effects of fly-tipping. If we'd had more time we would like to have arranged a trip to Mullaghglass landfill or Bryson Recycling and to completed a clean-up in the Hills
Any future recommendations?	This has been a fantastic project for creating globally aware citizens that are now green ambassadors for the environment, rolling out similar projects in the future should be considered.
Future maintenance	2019: The young people decided that they wanted to do another show for the junior school and their designs will form part of their GCSE assessment and will be on show in school.
Who involved?	BHP/OBF, Community Arts Partnership, Christine Boyle, Malone College, Muckamore Girls Brigade
Feedback obtained	<i>"I have become more confident by doing this project, I'd never made clothes from rubbish before this project and I'm really proud of what we made. I think I will recycle more, I didn't realise the impact on wildlife".</i>

"I've learned new skills like communication, teamwork and fashion coordination. I've learned about the environment I'm shocked that 1.3 million tonnes of waste ends up in the Belfast Hills each year. I feel this project had made me more open-minded".

"I feel that this project has made me more creative and it's given me a great sense of achievement. I've learned that the earth is not just ours, it's to share with animals and we need to show it respect. My new skills in fashion design have shown me that anything is possible with the resources you're given. The best thing about this project was the teamwork I feel like we're all much closer".

"Personally the things I've achieved from this project are teamwork, confidence, being creative, finding different ways to make a statement. I've also learned that there are consequences to littering and that you can make amazing things out of rubbish".

"I have a new insight into recycling, which means when it comes to rubbish I might reuse things or recycle them. I found this project fun and still amazed and surprised at my finished piece".

"I learned that everyone should be treated the same and that the environment is important. How rubbish can be harmful to nature and animals, but instead it can be turned into fashion. From this project I've developed more social skills that helped me understand other people's point of view. At the start it was really hard but I had good ideas and in the end I'm really proud of what I made.

"I have achieved skills like fashion designing, working in a group and working with a theme, also that you can make something out of rubbish, don't throw out crisp packets; make a dress out it. I've learned that we need to save our salmon".

"The best part of the project was making the clothing, learning time management and working under pressure, the worst part was the my nerves walking on the cat walk. The project has made me think about wildlife and the environment and reusing rubbish in a creative way".

"The best bit of the project was using trash to make my outfit into something unique. I was really nervous walking down the catwalk, but I really enjoyed this project and if anyone gets the chance to do it, I'd say give it a go and do it!"

"The start of the project was slow as nobody really had the confidence, but as time went on the team started to build and confidence grew with everyone".

"We have learnt the importance of responsibly disposing of our waste in a creative and fun way".

"I now have the confidence to say – that's wrong...also to be the change".

"I have learned about how important it is to put rubbish in bins and I will try to never drop litter. I will try to use less plastic than I do now and recycle more".

"I didn't know that certain things (even apples) take so long to decompose. I will think before I throw something out".





*Legacy &
Conclusions*



Legacy

The immediate legacy of the Our Bright Future programme was in the benefits gained from the young people who participated in the scheme and displayed changes in attitude, increases in confidence, Environmental knowledge, well-being, communication skills, leadership skills and a connection to wild places. For some of the young people this led to a change in career choices and in others led to employment in the green sector. These changes will ripple out into local communities, engage a much wider audience.

Over the years of the programme many different teachers and youth leaders were enabled to see the benefits of outdoor learning and gained the confidence to help their pupils spend more time learning in and about nature more going forward. A number of online films and resources were created that can be used beyond the end of the scheme to help leaders in this. A comprehensive Environmental Careers Guide was also created based on an online careers festival that was held during lock down, and will hopefully be a great reference guide for young people for years to come, helping them get jobs in the environmental sector.

Through the programme young people were empowered to feed into the NI Environment Strategy and the NI Climate Bill so helping influence long term policies and decision-making processes. This fed into the goal to help young people to be heard and play an active role in society.

Another exciting legacy outcome of the programme was the closer working of the Belfast Hills Partnership with the Ulster Wildlife. This resulted in the two organisations submitting a joint bid to the National Lottery Community Fund for a 'Wild Youth' project. This bid builds on the learning gained through the Our Bright Future process and feedback from the young people to create an exciting new project that will continue to support young people over the next 4 years. This bid was approved by the Lottery Fund in June 2021 and will ensure that the legacy of OBF will continue into the future.

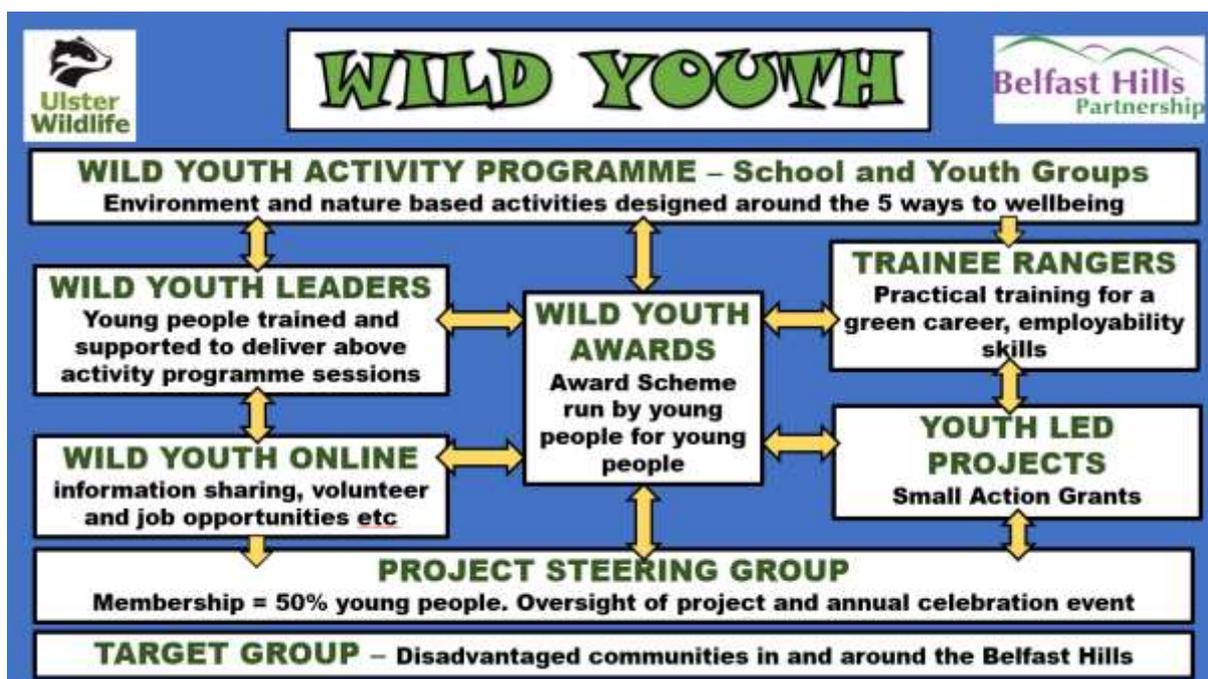


Diagram showing the key elements of the joint Wild Youth project.

Conclusions

This was a highly successful programme that exceeded its targets despite the disruption created by the pandemic preventing much of the planned activities in 2020 from happening.

The joint up approach of providing training, networking, joint campaigns and learning from the other 31 projects involved in the Our Bright Future Scheme, created greater opportunities for development of the BHP staff. Staff got involved in advocacy work, Government consultations and created better links with organisations such as Ulster Wildlife through joint working, so strengthening the scope and success of the project delivery.

Many impressive figures are quoted in this report from the 12,027 young people who participated in the scheme, 647 accreditations gained, 3638 young people from the top 20% most deprived areas across the whole of Northern Ireland to the 21ha of practical site improvements carried out. However, it is the words from the young people themselves, along with their teachers, parents and community group leaders that really demonstrate the value of this scheme. They spoke of changes in attitude, increases in confidence, Environmental knowledge, well-being, communication skills, leadership skills and a connection to wild places. Many of the older young people told us how this programme was instrumental in their chosen career pathways, and for some actually finding employment.

Overall the theme of friendship and fun shines out through the various reports, with young people connecting more with those around them as they connected with nature.

As one teacher commented, *“this was an amazing experience; the boys will remember it forever...they have improved in every area...”*. The creation positive experiences in and about nature that will last a life time is a legacy that the Belfast Hills Bright Future Team are very proud of.

Various studies have highlighted the benefits of connecting with nature in dealing with mental health issues. As the impacts of the pandemic continue to negatively impact upon young people the continuation of work to support young people (particularly those in deprived areas) is essential. The experiences gained during this programme leave the Belfast Hills Partnership well placed to undertake this important work.

We look forward to the next stage in this journey as we undertake the joint Wild Youth Project with Ulster Wildlife, enabling many more young people to get involved.



BELFAST HILLS BRIGHT FUTURE KEY OUTCOMES

The National Lottery Community Fund's Our Bright Future Programme enabled the Belfast Hills Partnership to work with young people aged 11-24 years.

Young people were connected with their local green spaces & empowered them to make positive changes.

Around half of the young people were engaged on a regular basis.



21ha of
environmental
improvement
works were
carried out by
the young
people

These environmental improvements included woodland and wildflower meadow creation, scrub clearance, invasive species removal, litter picked, paths created/maintained and planting of spring bulbs.



647 ACCREDITATIONS GAINED

These included John Muir Award, Millennium Volunteers Award, Lanta accreditation.



**INVOLVED 3638 YOUNG PEOPLE
FROM DEPRIVED AREAS**

The NI Multiple Deprivation Measure were used to define which young people were in the top 20% most deprived areas across the whole of NI.



**"THIS WAS AN
AMAZING
EXPERIENCE; THE
BOYS WILL REMEMBER
IT FOREVER...THEY
HAVE IMPROVED IN
EVERY AREA"**

Young people increased their confidence, wellbeing, environmental knowledge, communication & leadership skills and enjoyed a closer connection to wild places.

It was noted that this effect rippled out into the wider community with parents, teachers & local people being challenged and inspired by the young people.

To find out more visit belfasthills.org/our-bright-future/