

# Children in Scotland

## Heritage Hunters: Supporting Child-led Heritage



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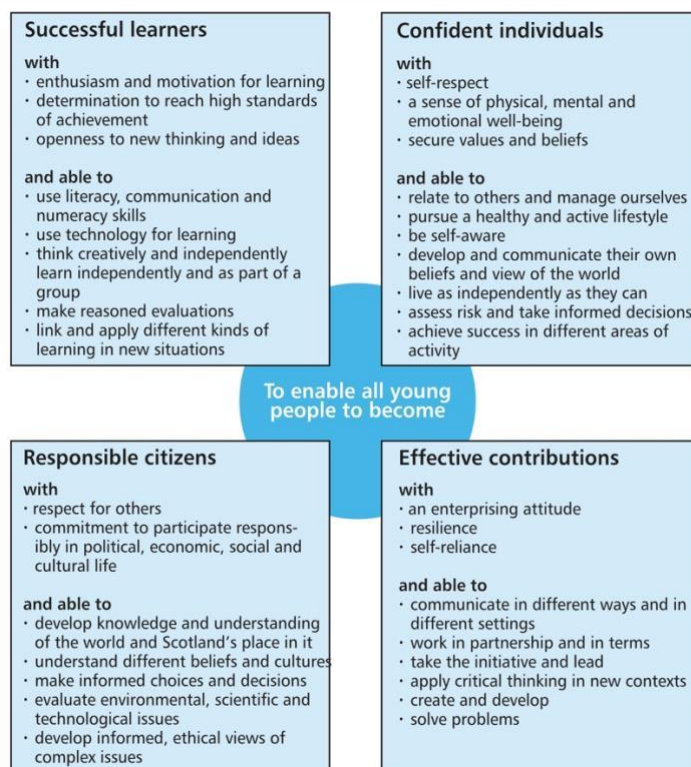
## Aim of this resource

Children in Scotland is in a unique position within the children's sector as a result of the varied work we do and the relationships we have with our members, the wider children's sector, local and national government and, most importantly, children and young people.

One of our priorities is to support the workforce to be more skilled, knowledgeable and better placed to deliver improved outcomes for all children. We are happy to share our own experiences and learning to achieve this.

This resource aims to support practitioners working with young people, with a particular focus on the area of heritage. This is based on our own principles and practices, developed through our work, including our Heritage Hunters project. However, the principles are applicable to all engagement work with children and young people.

It supports [Curriculum For Excellence's](#) curriculum areas including Social Studies and in particular Health And Wellbeing: developing self-awareness, self-worth, respect for others and emotional/social and mental wellbeing. It also supports young people to become Responsible Citizens, one of the Four Capacities (see below) of the Scottish Curriculum.



## Children in Scotland

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland. We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

### What is heritage?

Heritage – features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance.<sup>1</sup>

The Heritage Hunters project opened up the sphere of heritage to Children in Scotland staff and the young people and youth organisations we partnered with. It supported everyone's deeper understanding of the concept of heritage and the heritage sector within Scotland.

Through the project children and young people expressed that heritage is something very personal. They recognise that everyone's interpretation of heritage will be different, based on their lives and experiences.

***“Heritage means everything.”***

***“Everyone's heritage is different.”***

***“Heritage means you have something that means a lot to you.”***

***“Heritage are things to you that are special to you as a person.”***

Heritage itself can act as a medium of expression for ideas, identity, faith, beliefs and attitudes towards places and spaces.

Please see the Resources section for useful links.

<sup>1</sup><https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/heritage>

## **Heritage Hunters project**

Championing the participation and inclusion of children and young people is one of Children in Scotland's five strategic priorities. This is to ensure children and young people experience their views being listened to and acted on and they are active partners in policymaking and implementation. This must cover all aspects of young people's lives, including culture, leisure and heritage.

In the Year of Young People 2018, Children in Scotland undertook an extensive piece of work to bring together children and young people and heritage partners across Scotland with the aim of broadening children's participation in heritage settings, our Heritage Hunters project.

Participation was one of the six central themes of the Year of Young People 2018 and reflected its aim: to provide young people a platform to have their views heard and acted upon. Heritage Hunters supported children and young people's understanding of culture and heritage and encouraged their future engagement with heritage.

The aims of the project were:

- Provide opportunities for children and young people to access heritage, especially those who may experience barriers to heritage.
- Develop relationships: children and young people and heritage partners to learn from each other.
- Improve children and young people's participation and engagement with heritage, including their direct experience with heritage and their role in decision making in this sector.

The project additionally aimed to support staff within heritage settings to develop and refine their skills, allowing them to develop their own participative approaches to meaningfully engage with children and young people. This was to include developing participative approaches influenced by what children said works for them. One result would be for heritage partners to have developed new partnerships and ways of working to support future work beyond the lifetime of this project.

Heritage Hunters was funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Martin Connell Trust and The Hugh Fraser Foundation. Children in Scotland thanks our funders who made this extensive project possible.

## **A child rights-based approach**

Children in Scotland's work has a very strong children's rights focus. It is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and we are part of Together Scotland, an alliance of Scottish children's charities that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UNCRC.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children have the right to have a say and be taken seriously in all decisions which affect them.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child describes participation as: *'...ongoing processes, which include information sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such process.'*

In line with this, Children in Scotland's participation and engagement work seeks to engage children and young people in meaningful, ongoing dialogue and to enable them to have effective and fulfilling participation, thus ensuring that their voices influence the decisions and practices of policy makers and practitioners.

This approach was core to the Heritage Hunters project and through this project children have had the opportunity to use their voices to shape the direction of the work at each step of the way. Additionally, they have shared what they have learned and their thoughts with the local community through sharing events, activity days by contributing to museum exhibitions and as part of a national celebration event.

Our project was also underpinned by Article 31 of the UNCRC which states that children have the right to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. As a result, ALL children and young people should be able to participate in cultural activities. The project concentrated on working with groups who often experience barriers to accessing heritage opportunities.

### **Participation and engagement of children and young people**

In all participation and engagement work, children and young people should be actively listened to, treated fairly and have their opinions respected and taken seriously.

The participation of children and young people is an important mechanism to ensure that, as an organisation, Children in Scotland is listening and communicating to our members the views and perspectives of children and young people on a wide variety of issues, coupled with the best available evidence of what works for supporting children and their families.

To support our commitment Children in Scotland has developed its own *Principles and Guidelines*, from start to finish for any work involving children and young people, covering six stages:

1. Planning and coordination
2. Inclusion
3. Child protection

4. Delivery
5. Communication
6. Feedback, evaluation and next steps.

We are happy to share these Principles and Guidelines. They can be found on the Children in Scotland [website](#).

We encourage others to reflect upon their own practice and consider them in relation to their own organisational context.

### **Methods of engagement**

When working with children and young people we must remember they have a range of interests, abilities and needs and our methodologies must reflect this diversity. Activities must offer choice and accessibility, so practitioners must design and employ creative methods to work with children and young people to maximise engagement.

The Heritage Hunters project involved working with children and young people in a child-centred, creative and participative way, supported by the use of different media. Children in Scotland developed workshops in collaboration with heritage and youth partners, based on what children and young people were interested in. Each project was unique and the approach and methods used depended on the interests and needs of the groups.

A range of methods of engagement were used with children and young people including object handling, model making, investigation and research, photo tours, treasure chest activities, vox pops, archaeological digs, dig box training, plays and role play, poster making, letter writing, physical voting, creating characters together and story writing.

## Top Tips

Here are a few thought and ideas to help support the development of a child-led heritage project.

### Group Agreement

A group agreement should be established at the start of the project to help create an open and respectful environment. Children and young people are encouraged to take ownership over the agreement and should discuss and negotiate what they would like to be included. The agreement should also extend to facilitators. It's important that the environment feels safe and confidential. However, it is important to highlight that if anything is discussed which raises concern then this information may have to be passed on to the appropriate person. The group facilitator would explain this when establishing the agreement and they would let the young person know who they will pass the information on to.

### Icebreaker Activities

Icebreakers or warm-up games are short activities designed to help groups get to know each other, have fun and create a relaxed environment. These can be used at the start of the session or throughout to keep the group energised. The activity chosen will depend on what works best for the group you are working with.

### Human Treasure Hunt

On a flipchart write up a list of 'treasure' to find – and the treasure is people! For example:

- A. Someone who knows what the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is.
- B. Someone who likes to read books
- C. Someone who has a brother
- D. Someone who has a pet.

Give everyone a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to find the 'treasure' in the room by asking people what they know, what they do and what they like. They should write the letters down and put the name of the person they find – the treasure – next to the write one.

### Woolly Web

Ask everyone to sit in a circle. The person holding the ball of wool starts off by saying their name and one thing they like about themselves. They hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball of wool to someone within the circle. This continues until everyone has received the wool and is holding on to a piece of the string. This activity can be used at the end of a project to help evaluate the session. For example, what did you enjoy about the session today?



### **Pick a side**

Participants are asked to choose their preference e.g. Outdoors or indoors They go to one side of the room or the other (designated by the facilitator) to show which one they prefer. Discuss why people made the choices they made.

### **Talk for as long as a piece of string!**

Participants select a piece of string from an envelope. Each person in turn holds the string between their thumb and forefinger. Each individual wraps the string around their finger and speaks until the string is fully wound up.

## **Methods and Approaches**

### **Exploring Heritage**

Children are given two choices and are asked to stand on either side of the room. The activity can start off with a couple of light questions to get the groups warmed up. The next stage is to incorporate some heritage themed questions to get them thinking about heritage. Example questions may include:

**Do you think this music could be heritage?**

**Do you think this food could be heritage?**

**Do you think this material could be heritage?**

This activity is an easy way to start to encourage children and young people to think about heritage in more of an all-encompassing way and can involve: music, dance, food, theatre or fashion.

### **Heritage in the World**

- In groups ask children to think of examples of things from the past. Explain that sometimes we refer to this as 'heritage'.
- Ask children to write or draw on the flipchart examples of heritage:
  1. In the world
  2. In the UK
  3. In Scotland
  4. In Kirkcaldy.
- Ask the group to explain why these things/people/sources/places are heritage or things from the past.
- Provide some prompts to get them thinking about heritage- refer to earlier icebreaker (music, food, textiles, pictures etc.)

- Feedback other suggestions to the group.

## **Vox Pops**

Vox pops are short interview segments (which can be filmed on smart phones or iPads or any other recording device). Ask the children to consider the question and work in groups to write a couple of clear points that they would like to communicate. Ask the pairs to nominate one person to speak and the other to film! Vox pops should only take a couple of minutes so the children can try as many takes as they like.

Things for children to think about:

- Take a moment or two to write down exactly what you would like to say
- Take some time to practise talking through your key points
- Be careful not to shake the camera when filming
- Think about how you would like to do your Vox pop (an interview, a statement or chat show format).

Creating Vox pops is an interactive way of finding out what young people think and allows for a sense of ownership. Young people can be encouraged to use creative approaches to how they approach the video e.g. interview, chat show style or animation.

## **Creating a Character**

Working with children to create a character is a well-used methodology and is particularly useful when exploring sensitive topics. Creating a character can involve a whole group (for example, drawing round a person or template and then writing or drawing within the body itself). However, this method can also be adapted and used in a one to one setting or with smaller groups. For example, children can decorate or create their own individual puppets and can use role play to explore issues related to the theme that are important to the character. This method can be used to discuss a range of different topics.

## **Journey Mapping**

Following on from 'creating a character' the journey methodology can also be used with children. This methodology can be used to discuss different issues including transition and change. This could be focused on a particular period of time. A large floor map depicting different ways that you can go on a journey (river, stream, railway, road, mountain, sky etc.) is one way of using this methodology. As part of the exercise you can explain to a child that the character they have created is going on a journey and we need to think of things that can help them on their way (having someone to talk to, knowing where to go for help etc.) However, it is important to keep in mind

that metaphors might not work well for all children, so it is best to check beforehand.

### **Participation: Right or Wrong (Musical Rights!)**

This activity is aimed at introducing various Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to younger age groups.

Step 1– Whole group discussion about rights in general, record discussion somewhere visible.

Step 2 – Write down a combination of children's rights and non-rights onto coloured card and place them face down on the floor. Put the music on and invite the children to dance (or walk around the space). When the music stops ask the children to stand on a piece of card.

Step 3 – Ask each child in turn to read out their card and as a group discuss whether they think what is written is/isn't a right.

This activity is a good way of prompting discussion about why it is important for children to understand their rights. This can be an opportunity to explore children's rights within the context of culture and heritage.

## Case Studies

### 'Edinburgh Young Carers in Charge' Edinburgh

**Overview-** Museums & Galleries Edinburgh worked collaboratively with around 15 young people aged between (9-16) on co-curating an exhibition.

As part of the project the group were able to visit the following heritage sites: Museum of Edinburgh, The People's Story and Museum. The group designed an exhibition launch at The People's Story to celebrate the opening of their exhibition with family and friends.

**Methods-** There was a range of different ways of working including: object handling and cleaning, tours of the collection centre, creating vox pops, poster activities and drawing and a chance to evaluate an exhibition.

**Process-** The group selected objects that were special to them to be displayed as part of their exhibition. Additionally, they selected objects from the Museums Collection Centre linked to themes that were important to them. In the final stage of the process the group wrote exhibition labels and decided on the layout of the room.

**Highlights-** Gaining a fresh and honest perspective from the young people and hearing about how heritage can become more appealing to young people.

**Key Learning-** It takes time to develop working relationships, establish roles and understand the young people's learning needs and interests. Extending the time for this project would benefit the young people as they would potentially have the opportunity to design their own exhibits.

***"The group has been fun because I got to try new things." (young carer)***

#### **Young Carers in Charge Exhibition** **Engagement ring, c.1920s**

This belonged to my great gran. It is made of gold with a fire opal in the centre and small diamonds around the sides. My ring is at least 90 years old.

My great gran had to pawn her original engagement ring for money to buy food for her kids. Once my gran found this out she saved up her money for months to buy her a new one because she felt terrible for being the reason she pawned it.

***Why is the object important to you?***

***"It just reminds me of my family heritage and that things weren't always the way they are now." (young carer)***

## **'Team Tenements' Glasgow**

**Overview-** Institute for Heritage and Sustainable Human Development (INHERIT) worked with 30 Primary 6s from Miller Primary in Castlemilk, Glasgow. The pupils worked to investigate local heritage around the theme of the 'Big Flit' and designed and shared their findings through an interactive exhibition with the Primary 2 class. As part of their investigation the class visited the People's Palace.

**Methods-** A variety of methods were used with the group including: mapping, carousel activity, poster making, and logo design.

**Process-** The children we worked with took on the role of investigators to explore what life was like during the '50s/'60s when people moved from Glasgow City Centre to Castlemilk. The children compared what they found out with life today. The children started by exploring maps and then identifying research questions linked to things and places that help them to feel happy, healthy and safe. The group visited the People's Palace and this inspired them to plan their own exhibition. The group identified that they wanted to carry out fun and interactive activities similar to those at the People's Palace. The class facilitated their exhibition with 20 of the Primary 2 class. Interactive exhibition activities included: voting, matching games, playing music, dancing, dressing up, street games, taste testing and object handling.

**Highlights-** The highlight of the project was the group delivering and facilitating their exhibition with the Primary 2 class. The hope is that the project will create a legacy allowing other classes in the school to take a lead on their own heritage projects.

**Key Learning-** One of the challenges experienced, when working with heritage partners who work on a voluntary basis, is that they may pull out of the process due to other time commitments. As a result, we had to change heritage partner and adapt our planning to accommodate.

***"The most enjoyable part was when we showed the P2s what we were learning."*** (Primary 6 child)

## **The Citadel Youth Centre Young Mum's Group Edinburgh**

**Overview-** Museums & Galleries Edinburgh worked collaboratively with five young mums from The Citadel and a children's writer to create a children's book exploring the experience of being a young mum today. The book also reflected on the experiences of being a young mum in the past.

**Methods-** We worked over two sessions with a storywriter. As part of our sessions we created a character which became a 'Supermum figure'. The character outlined the positive qualities of being a young mum which included: knowing your own mind, trusting in yourself, being resilient and having lots of energy. The babies were present at the sessions and we brought a 'treasure chest' with tactile and shiny objects for the babies to explore and keep them occupied.

**Process-** We worked with the mums over two sessions, the story was collated by the children's author. As part of the sessions we considered photographs and objects from the Museum of Childhood and these acted as a starting point for conversation. The group reflected on what life was like as a mum during their mother and grandmother's generation. The group also considered different books and formats. The final stage of the project involved hosting a book launch.

**Highlights-** The highlight of the project was the young mums hearing their story and expressing that this reflected their experiences and the messages they wanted to communicate.

**Key Learning-** Coordinating a children's book takes time and as a result we were unable to host a workshop with an illustrator. A workshop with an illustrator would have allowed the mums to get more involved with this aspect of the work and contribute to their own illustrations.

## Resources

Links to:

Children in Scotland's [Principles and Guidelines](#)  
Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland [7 Golden Rules of Participation](#)  
Children in Scotland's [Heritage Hunters 6 month report](#)  
National Lottery Heritage Fund [How to Involve Young People on Heritage Projects](#)  
Youthlink's [Engaging Young People In Heritage](#) resource  
Young Scot's [Heritage Blueprint Report](#)  
Archaeology Scotland's [Heritage Hero Award](#)

Links and websites:

[Historic Environment Scotland](#)  
[Museums And Galleries Scotland](#)  
[Scottish Natural Heritage](#)  
[National Trust For Scotland](#)  
[Scottish Civic Trust](#)  
[Inherit](#)  
[Young Archaeologists' Club](#)  
[Dig It](#)  
[Year Of Young People 2018](#)

## **The participation and engagement of children and young people: Our Principles and Guidelines**

These Principles and Guidelines are in line with how rights are described by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. They have been developed to inform the way we involve children and young people in our work.

We are happy to share these Principles and Guidelines. We encourage others to reflect upon their own practice and consider them in relation to their own organisational context.

### **Six key stages**

These Principles and Guidelines can be applied at all times, from start to finish of any work involving children and young people.

#### **1. Planning and coordination**

Participation and engagement with children and young people should begin at the project design stage. They should be included in the planning and coordination of activity from the start.

#### **2. Inclusion**

When conducting any participation and engagement work, the group should be as inclusive as possible, ensuring a mixed demographic and removal of any barriers to participation.

#### **3. Child protection**

Awareness of child rights and meaningful participation complement and strengthen child protection practices. Every organisation must follow its own child protection guidelines.

#### **4. Delivery**

At the start of any session, always make it clear to the children and young people that there are no right or wrong answers when being consulted about their views. The purpose behind any participation activity should also be clearly explained to the children and young people at the outset. A variety of approaches and methods should be used to suit the needs of the group.

#### **5. Communication**

All communication in participation and engagement work should be accessible, clear and accurate.



## 6. Feedback, evaluation and next steps

No project is complete until the children and young people know how their voices have been listened to, what impact their contribution has made, and what has happened as a result of what they said and why.