



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to celebrate the five-year partnership between High Life Highland and Growing2gether. The partnership began in 2019 and has blossomed from there, enhancing the work of both organisations. Our respect for the youth work that High Life Highland does is immense and we have learned well from each other. To date Growing2gether has worked with over 1,500 children and young people, which we could not have done without the wonderful support from High Life Highland.

Growing2gether is committed to support young people to find long-term solutions to their problems and those of their communities. In partnership with Highland Council and local secondary and primary school, our 18-week programme pairs disengaged young people as a mentor to a young child in a nursery who needs additional support, leading to a Level 4 SCVQ qualification (Self Awareness/Self in Community Units). Through this mentoring opportunity we aim to raise both young people and children's self-belief and aspiration and to grow into their unique and abundant potential as well as become a positive force for change in their communities.

Training Youth Development Officers to deliver Growing2gether

To support schools becoming independent and able to continue delivering Growing2gether in an on-going capacity, the partnership with High Life Highland enabled us to train both a school staff member and High Life Highland Youth Development Officers and strengthen our sustainability in remote areas. This initiative dramatically lowered the cost of the programme whilst maintaining an on-going relationship with our Charity providing Quality Assurance, outcome evaluation and supervision. In total, Growing2gether has trained 11 Youth Development Officers and 12 Secondary School staff during this partnership.

"I've been working with G2G for several years now involving two different secondary schools and it has been a fantastic experience. Not only has it been a pleasure to co-facilitate with Amanda, it's been a really positive process working with dozens of young people and seeing them develop and progress throughout the programme. As a YDO not only has it been great to partner with such a professional organisation. Co-facilitating in the programme has helped my professional development as has the comprehensive training that came alongside it."

Fraser Morrison Youth Development Officer

"Growing2gether has been a fantastic opportunity for me as a Youth Development Officer. The course/s has given me the opportunity to support young people towards accredited awards through relevant learning and shared experiences. In turn I have developed skills to deliver, co-work and take a shared responsibility to run the sessions. However, the most important aspect (besides seeing the young people achieve, grow in confidence and self-esteem) is that I get to engage with the young people and build up a great working relationship. This is very important to me as it allows possible future youth work engagement and also feels like I'm making a positive contribution to a young person's life. Being in the Millburn Academy on a regular basis is great for partnership working and gives teaching staff an insight into the contribution that Highlife Highland Youth work staff can make with supporting young people through alternative education."

Andy McMahon, Millburn Academy, Youth Development Officer

Growing2gether is based on Transformative Positive Psychology

Growing2gether is underpinned by transpersonal psychology, which provides a holistic psychological approach focusing on enabling individuals to access more of their potential; on developing self-awareness and personal responsibility and on recognising the importance of meaning as requirements for wellbeing and positive engagement with society.

Growing2gether focuses on bringing out the unique potential of young people, rather than seeing them as a 'problem', empowering them with life skills, work experience and a deeper understanding of who they are. Moreover, through mentoring and being a role model for a small child in need of additional support, multiple levels of engagement are fostered, all of which increase a young person's sense of connectedness; fosters a sense of meaning and purpose; increased engagement with their local community through having a responsible role to fulfil and an experience of their potential – of what they are capable of achieving.

A strong outcome of this way of working is an awareness of our fundamental interconnectedness evoking a sense of belonging and that who they are and what they do matters. The young people develop their social/emotional skills through the practical nursery experience and can continue with Growing2gether through the In the Community programme. We are currently expanding the training and delivery of more programmes across Scotland.

Tracking young people for a 'Positive Destination'

Most importantly the partnership has produced a consistent and high impact on young people. Using Highland Council's system for tracking young people when they leave school for a 'positive destination' (continued education, employment or training), Jo Chamberlain, Transition Co-ordinator, has kindly been tracking young people who have done the Growing2gether Programme. There is a 2–3 year *time lag* as young people do the programme when they are 13-14 years of age, which strengthens the outcomes. We are delighted to say that of a sample of 233 young people tracked, 93% have reached a positive destination upon leaving school.

"I love coming to nursery...it's my best day in the whole week 'cos I know that what I am doing is positive and the child I am working with runs up to me smiling when I arrive. I feel I am making a difference."

*Rachel, 14, Growing2gether participant.
Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

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Outcome reports

Our latest outcome evaluation report can be read here
<https://www.growing2gether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Growing2gether-Impact-Report-January-22-February-23-FINAL.pdf>

Scottish Youth Mentoring Children

In 2022 Growing2gether reached 99 young people facing disadvantage mentoring 99 children across the Scottish Highlands

"It felt amazing getting to express my opinions and feelings about things. Getting to hear others' opinions was fantastic too as it does give you a sense of feeling like you are not alone. Growing2gether has allowed me to share and speak out about certain issues which has honestly felt like taking a weight off my shoulders."

- programme participant

of young people achieved a Level Four SCVQ Personal Development Award (Self Awareness and Self in Community Units)

85%



31%

improvement in participant mindset - critical for strong mental health

of young people agreed that education provides them with more opportunities in the future

80%



80%

of teachers said that the young people appeared more confident

of programme users would recommend Growing2gether to others

90%



Growing2gether is an Independent Scottish Charity SC051919
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