



United
Nations

INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH DAY

2026

DIFFERENT
CONTEXTS,
COMMON
ASPIRATIONS

*meet the young volunteers
making a difference in
Scotland's rural communities*



Iona Dundas

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Hi, my name's Iona Dundas and I'm a member of the Orkney Youth Local Action Group (YLAG).

We are a group aged 16-30 that does a range of things, like running our own projects, including a stationary project where we gathered and packed a wide range of stationery to give to schools. We also fund other local projects that align with our goals.



Photo credit: Iona Dundas

An average week for me...

I usually have a mixture of work, volunteering and family commitments. I will often be at my job on Mondays and Tuesdays.

On Wednesdays, I clean my grandparents' house, then have a driving lesson, then go on to volunteer at a group called Digital Friends where I help people learn technology. I then will either have a YLAG meeting or have a different youth group meeting, called Neuropoint, where we advocate for neurodivergent youth in Scotland.

On Thursdays, I work, and sometimes on a Friday, I travel down south to take part in national events with young people across Scotland. These have been focused on a multitude of topics such as education, finance, and work experience.

This time next year...

I want to see more meaningful, long-term engagement with youth voice groups from people in power. And by meaningful, I mean that the people in power should come, actively listen to youth voice, and if they can't act on it, explain why.

I'd also like more frequent bus services as many struggle to access events and jobs in their local community, which further increases the isolation many feel.

And while I recognise that a solution won't come within a year, people are still crying out for more affordable housing in rural areas across Scotland.

Anna Wylie

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I'm Anna Wylie and I am a member of the Fife Youth Local Action Group.

I am a young farmer working on my family's beef and arable farm. I studied law and hold two master's degrees, in International Security and also in International Law of Global Security, Peace, and Development, which specialises in economics, sustainability, and governance.

I am passionate about advocating for sustainable food systems, challenging power imbalances, and creating space for young people to meaningfully participate in policy discussions.

An average week for me...

I recently founded the UK Youth Food and Farming Forum (UK YFFF), a youth-led chapter of the World Food Forum. We bring together people aged 18-35 to collectively develop our skills, increase our confidence, and amplify our voices to shape food and farming policy across the UK.

This means my days are very varied! From checking the cows and sorting fences, to engaging with UK YFFF partner organisations, and hopefully enjoying some time in the garden too! The weather normally determines what my working day will look like, so it can be difficult to stick to a plan.



Photo credit: Anna Wylie

This time next year...

I'd like to see greater support to combat rural crime. Around our farm and across our local area, fly tipping, hare coursing, and antisocial behaviour are common occurrences.

As a young female, this can make me feel quite insecure living in a rural area at times. I hope that greater protections and support can exist to help alleviate rural crime in my area!



Jocelyn Downes

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My name is Jocelyn, I'm 26 and have been an active member of the Orkney Youth Local Action Group for over two years now.

Living in a rural and sometimes isolating community, means that getting together monthly to discuss and brainstorm challenges affecting the young people in Orkney, and also to socialise, has been a huge positive in my life.



Photo credit: Jocelyn Downes

An average week for me...

I work multiple jobs, in the local library, a charity shop, and also as a youth worker for rural youth clubs.

This time next year...

There are many issues close to my heart that I would love to address in our community, housing being a big one.

However, I currently think the most vital challenges we face is Mental Health Support, specifically for young people. I would love to see more support put in place for people affected by suicide, grief, and mental health challenges.

Gabi Brame

Hi, I'm Gabi from the Forth Valley and Lomond Youth Local Action Group!

We love to support local folks to run their own amazing projects through our Youth Impact Fund, which is currently in its third year. I especially enjoy supporting climate action and biodiversity related projects!



Photo credit: Gabi Brame

An average week for me...

A typical week for me involves working at the Students' Union at the University of Stirling, where I run the Green & Blue Space sustainability hub on campus. I also try to enjoy as much time outdoors as possible.

This time next year...

I hope to see more ecological restoration projects popping up! I'd also love to see more bicycle paths connecting rural communities.

Ellie Moore

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Hello! My name is Ellie and I am part of the Cairngorms Youth Action Team and Cairngorms Youth Local Action Group (YLAG).

I am part of the first ever YLAG created in Scotland. We were involved in the launch of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto in 2018, where young people across Europe called for change in our rural communities and protected areas.

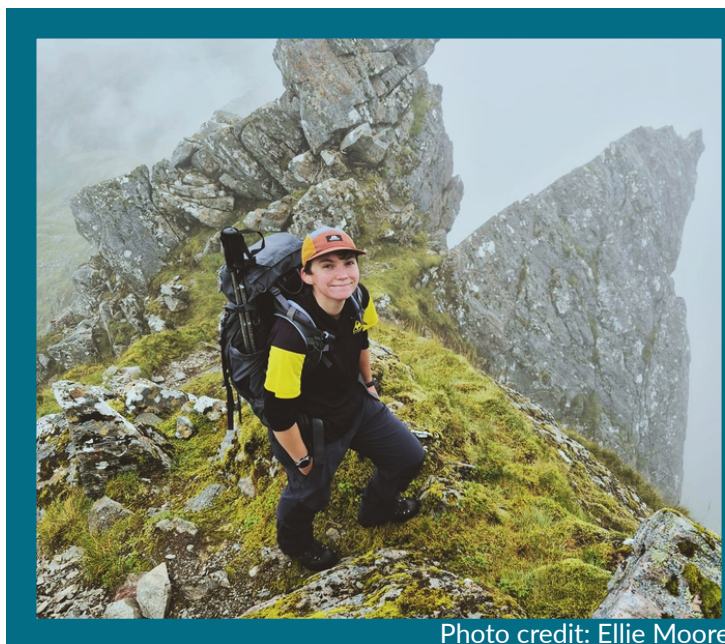


Photo credit: Ellie Moore

An average week for me...

I work as a ranger for a small conservation charity in the Highlands. I am responsible for running volunteer days and educating groups, students, and the public on what we do and how they can help.

I especially enjoy working more with local young people as part of developing our ranger programme, which is designed to provide a pathway into the industry!

Outside of work, I am a keen hillwalker and volunteer expedition leader, but during the rainier weeks I can be found playing video games and making short films.

I also make time for YLAG meetings, events, and residentials across the year, which are always a highlight!

This time next year...

I'd love to see more opportunities and longterm funded posts for young people to get involved in the conservation industry and work with nature.

Our generation is so environmentally conscious and has both the passion and drive: we just need more job security, to give young people the confidence to start careers which will keep our rural landscapes safe in the future!

I also hope to see more affordable housing in the Highlands!

Michaela Scott

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Hi! I'm Michaela Scott, a founding member of the Forth Valley and Lomond Youth Local Action Group.

We're a group of young people aged 16-35 working together across three local authority areas, to make a positive difference in our rural communities by giving young people a voice.

An average week for me...

No two weeks are the same!

Alongside studying Criminology and Politics at the University of Stirling, I work part-time as the communications intern for my Youth Local Action Group, where I help promote opportunities for young people across the region.

I am also a board member at Hawkhill Community Association and at Project Sonrisa, where I help represent young people's voices and contribute to community development.



Photo credit: Scottish Rural Action

This time next year...

I'd love to see more opportunities for young people to get involved in shaping their communities.

Whether that's through stronger youth representation in the public sector, or simply more local events and activities to take part in, I want every rural young person to feel like their voice matters and that they can make a real difference.

We also need better bus and public transport options so young people in rural areas can access opportunities, services, and communities more easily.



I am a 20-year-old who loves being involved with the Borders Youth Local Action Group and meeting new people.

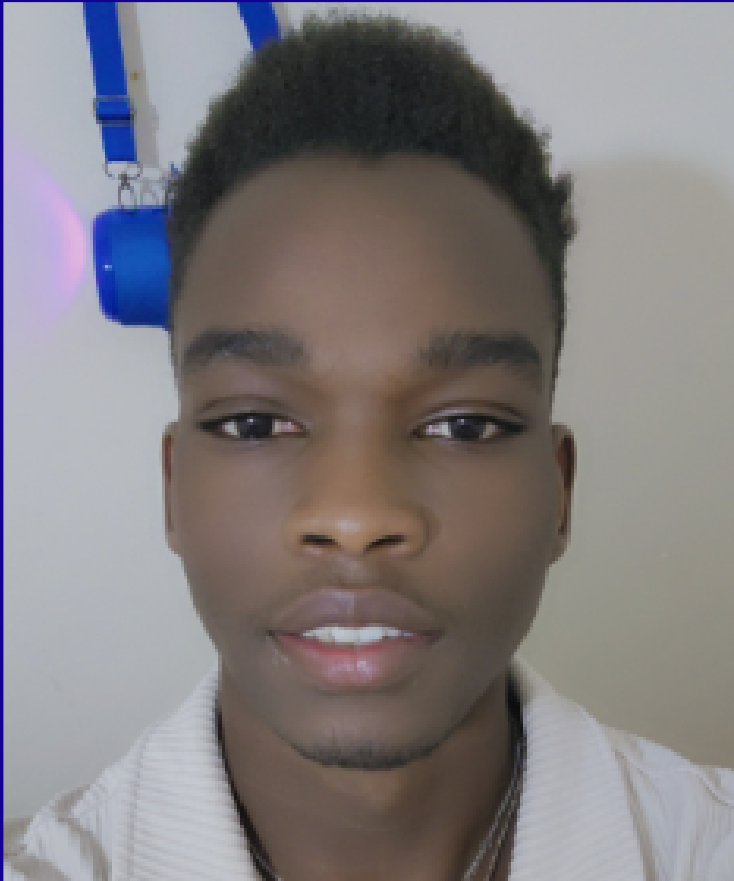


Photo credit: Ibrahim Raji

An average week for me...

I am at college learning about childcare. I also work at a youth group, called Cheviot Youth, as a youth worker. Then I hang out with my friends and family, and try to get involved in community events.

This time next year...

I would like to see bike-accessible buses, and have more Youth Local Action Group events!

Jess

Hi, my name is Jess. I'm 21 and live in a rural town called Galashiels, and I am part of the Scottish Borders YLAG.

We focus on helping young people with their ideas and businesses, to help them start, or help keep them up and running.

We are a small group with so much to give to help our local communities.

An average week for me...

Every 2 weeks can be different, and can involve going through the grants we give to the community, to planning more ways to help our rural areas, and meeting new people from different countries.

This time next year...

I would like to see more transport timetables, and see the train line going further than Tweedbank.

We also need more financial support locally for young people, to help them afford their homes and shopping, to make living in rural areas more welcoming so more people can stay here.

Aurelia Drayak

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Hello, I'm Aurelia Drayak and I have been part of the Orkney Youth Local Action Group since it first began.

We make change happen in our local community, both through funding projects that improve life in Orkney and by starting our own initiatives based on what is important to us.



Photo credit: Orkney YLAG

An average week for me...

Along with the amazing projects I get to work on with the Youth Local Action Group, such as providing access to stationary and school supplies to students and accessible play parks, I also volunteer in my local community, I'm a carer, and I'm currently studying bioinformatics.

This time next year...

I want to see a children's hospital being built so we can finally access pediatric health care without leaving Orkney.

Currently, children and young people have to travel off island by boat or plane for even the simplest care. Because of how long the boat takes, and infrequent flights and schedules, you can lose a day on either side of an appointment.

For those with disabilities or complex health, months of their life can be taken by the travel alone.



Photo credit:
Scottish Rural Action

Reece Wylie

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I am Reece, 24, and my Youth Local Action Group is in the Scottish Borders.

We help give grants to young people and local businesses to help them start up and develop further.

An average week for me...

I do lots of volunteer work with the TD1 Youth Hub, with the Borders Additional Needs Group, and with the Scottish Borders Champions Board for care experienced young people – as well as with the Youth Local Action Group.

I am also a DJ and play rugby.



Photo credit: Borders YLAG

This time next year...

I would like to see more reliable, regular, and friendly transport.



Photo credit: Borders YLAG



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For more information, contact: mia@sra.scot



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