



Re-imagining
Scotland for Young
Women and Girls



The Young Women's Movement Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

Welcome

Welcome from our Chair - Dr Anastacia Elle Ryan

The great thing about movements is that they can present an inclusive vision for all to join together. With this new Strategic Plan, we invite everyone along with us to re-imagine Scotland for young women and girls. A Scotland where young women are meaningfully heard, valued and supported to lead collective action and transformational change.

Building on the substantial growth and achievements of the YWCA, our new five year strategy reflects our evolution to become the Young Women's Movement. A coming of age journey that will see the organisation change in brand, structure and focus, while reaffirming our intersectional feminist approach to ensuring that all young women and girls can live and thrive to their full potential.

This Strategic Plan marks a key moment of transition for the Young Women's Movement. It builds on the impactful work to date, embraces the change and growth developed through the pandemic, for us to now cement our vision and values for all our foreseeable plans, partnerships and activities.

We are absolutely thrilled to share this bold, brave and exciting new phase of the journey for the Young Women's Movement Scotland. We hope that it will incite new conversations and inspire new partnerships to collectively work towards our mission to build a movement embedded in safe spaces and wellbeing for young women and girls to come together, challenge inequality and lead radical social change.



Welcome from our CEO - Jenni Snell

I am delighted to introduce the world to our new ambitious and bold five-year strategic plan alongside our Chair, Dr Anastacia Elle Ryan.

What excites me the most about this strategy is that it is a wholehearted expression of our organisational principles and values. We worked across our organisation ensuring that the voices of our advisory panel, staff team, participants and our board of trustees were reflected and represented. Therefore, this strategy is a collective statement to be implemented together with young women and girls to create transformational gender equality in Scotland.

As we approach our 100-year anniversary as a stand-alone organisation in Scotland, it's important to celebrate that success and refocus our vision in the current Scottish context. This process has allowed us to re-imagine the vibrant potential of the movement, leading us to an exciting new brand identity that will help take us on that journey. We now stand ready to take on the challenge of re-imagining an equitable Scotland for and by young women and girls.

We will do this by unlocking young women and girls' potential; connecting their voices and experience; mobilising collective action and ultimately challenging systemic inequality. All of this will be underpinned by inspiring a culture of feminist wellbeing.

Our ambition is bold, we know it won't be easy and that we can't do this alone. Collaboration with young women and a diverse range of partners must be at the heart of our plan if we want to make this a reality. We truly believe if anyone can achieve our vision, it is this movement of incredibly passionate, brave and unwavering feminist young women and girls.

If you're as excited about this strategy as we are, please get involved and join the movement.

Together we will re-imagine Scotland for young women and girls.



Who we are and why we do what we do:

We are the Young Women's Movement- Scotland's national organisation for young women's feminist leadership and collective action against gender inequality. We are for all self-identifying young women and girls. We value the power, and recognise the necessity, of working both intersectionally and intergenerationally to achieve change. Young women, girls and non-binary people who recognise themselves within this movement are at the heart of everything that we do by participating, co-designing and leading.

Throughout our strategy we refer to our primary audience as self-identifying young women and girls. However, our audience is also inclusive of people of marginalised genders who feel comfortable in a space that centres the experiences of young women and girls.

Our vision

Our vision is a fairer Scotland for all self-identifying young women and girls: a Scotland where young women are meaningfully heard, valued and supported to lead collective action and enact transformational change throughout society, systems and structures.

Our mission

We work to build a movement embedded in safe spaces and wellbeing for young women and girls to come together and access resources, networks and platforms to collectively challenge inequality, lead radical social change and re-imagine our world.



Intersectional¹ feminist principles

- > We value the diversity of lived experience from the young women and girls that we work with. Young women and girls are the experts of their own lives
- > We collaborate across social movements to create local, national and international change
- > We shift the balance of power to centre the voices and experiences of young women and girls who are at greatest risk of systemic discrimination

Youth work principles

- > Participation in our work is voluntary. We provide a range of opportunities that enable young women and girls to participate in ways that work best for them and suit their needs
- > Our work builds from where young women and girls are on their individual journeys
- > We work collaboratively with young women and girls to enable them to create change in their own lives, their communities and society at large

Participation principles

- > Our work is led by and for young women and girls. We co-design our programmes, research, campaigns and future strategic direction with young women from the outset
- > We take a proactive approach to removing barriers to young women and girls' participation throughout the organisation at both strategic and operational levels
- > We continually collect feedback from our community and adapt our ways of working transparently based on the views and experiences shared with us

¹Intersectional feminism was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Equality, diversity and inclusion underpin everything we do. We are fair and equitable.

Our work is **participatory**. We exist for young women and are led by young women.

We empower participants to build communities of friendship and support networks and find **joy** in our collective actions and connections.

We understand the impact of challenging inequality on those most affected by it. We lead with **kindness** and **empathy**, putting collective **wellbeing** at the core of our organisation.

We deliver our work with **integrity** and are proud of the work we do.

We are **bold** and **brave**. We do not shy away from challenging the status quo and taking radical steps to make gender equality a reality in Scotland

Commitments to our values

We live and breathe our values, they are integral to everything we do. Through our values we make a strong commitment to:

Championing diversity, equality and inclusion by...

- > Continually working to become a truly anti-racist organisation and sharing our platform with Black women and women of colour to amplify their ideas, experiences and talents
- > Implementing inclusive and anti-ableist practices across our organisation with an understanding that young women and non-binary people will experience inequality differently
- > Acting in solidarity with other social movements that share our values to equality, diversity and inclusion and nurturing relationships with feminist allies to further our shared vision for an equitable future
- > Building a sustainable organisation with a focus on gendered climate justice
- > Embracing the power of diversity and prioritising the voices and experiences of those at greatest risk of systemic discrimination

Being **participatory** by...



- > Ensuring the voices of young women, girls and people of marginalised genders are at the centre of all of our programmes, research and campaigns
- > Continuing the evolution and engagement of our advisory group of young women, girls and people of marginalised genders to shape the future direction of the organisation
- > Creating pathways for young women's leadership development within our organisation and having a minimum of 25% of our board of trustees under the age of 35

Promoting **joy** as an act of resistance by...



- > Protecting space for creativity and imagination in our practice to help channel our change-making energy
- > Collectively celebrating together as a movement to share unity, strength, and resilience in the face of resistance
- > Championing a culture of rest, enjoyment, hope and celebration to cultivate the endurance of our community

Leading with **kindness, empathy and promoting wellbeing** by...



- > Placing the wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and community of participants at the heart of everything we do
- > Demonstrating compassionate leadership through self-reflection, authenticity, understanding and careful listening
- > Prioritising inclusion and actively showing care for others and ourselves

Delivering our work with **integrity** by...



- > Being open and transparent through ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes and communicating the impact of our work
- > Holding ourselves accountable to our partners, our funders and the young women and girls we work with
- > Acknowledging when we make mistakes and committing to learning from them
- > Making ethical choices and doing the right thing even if it is the more difficult path

Being **bold** and **brave** by...



- > Embracing innovative ideas, testing new ways of working and being agile in our approach
- > Investing in an organisational culture that gives us permission to take chances, embrace ethical risk-taking and inspire innovation
- > Challenging the status quo, embracing uncomfortable conversations and displaying strength and courage through radical actions

Policy frameworks

Our work delivers and supports progress on several national and international policy frameworks as outlined below:

Scotland's National Performance Outcomes

In Scotland our programmes, campaigns and research contribute nationally to the following performance outcomes:

- > Young people grow up loved, safe and respected so we realise our full potential
- > Young people are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society
- > Young people are healthy and active
- > Young people are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely
- > Young people respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

Scotland's Human Rights Bill

Our work seeks to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of women and children. In 2021 the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership published its findings, urging the Scottish Government to introduce a new law incorporating several core international human rights treaties into domestic law to enhance how rights are protected in Scotland. The Scottish Government have committed to incorporating four treaties which have the potential to provide significant protections for women and girls:

- > the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- > the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- > the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- > the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)"

UNCRC

There is strong aspiration for the UNCRC to be incorporated into Scot's Law, the bill was favourably passed in March 2021 at Scottish Parliament. The UNCRC is relevant for our work with young women and girls up to the age of 18 years old:

- > **Article 12:** Children and young people have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously.
- > **Article 13:** Children and young people have the right to find out and share information and to have freedom of expression
- > **Article 15:** Children and young people have the right to meet with friends and to join groups and have the human right to freedom of association
- > **Article 17:** Children and young people have the right to access information from a variety of sources
- > **Article 19:** Children and young people have the right to be protected from violence and hurt
- > **Article 29:** Children and young people have the right to an education which develops their personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.
- > **Article 31:** Children and young people have a right to relax, play and have fun in the way they want to.
- > **Article 34:** Children and young people have the right to be protected from sexual abuse and violence
- > **Article 42:** All children, young people and adults should know about the UNCRC

Sustainable Development Goals

At an international level, our work with young women and girls can be mapped across most of the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals, the key areas of impact are:

- > Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- > Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- > Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

In addition, we have also supported an extensive range of key strategies and policy frameworks including: National Youth Work Outcomes; Independent Strategic Review of Funding and Commissioning of Violence Against Women and Girls Services; Tackling Social Isolation and Loneliness; Race Equality Framework for Scotland; National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2018 Recommendations; National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2019 Recommendations.



Making our vision a reality

All of our activity will be focused on delivering our five key strategic pillars in line with our organisational Theory of Change:

1. Unlocking young women and girls' potential
2. Connecting young women and girls' voices and experiences
3. Mobilising young women and girls' collective action
4. Challenging systemic inequality affecting young women and girls in Scotland
5. Inspiring feminist wellbeing for and by young women and girls



Unlocking Potential

We create the conditions for change through our programmes, training and safe spaces to develop young women and girls' skills, confidence and conviction

- > We meet young women and girls where they are at, using a feminist and youth work approach to create safe spaces that build strong and trusting relationships. Through our work, young women and girls are exposed to new ideas that broaden their understanding and perspectives of intersectional feminism
- > Young women and girls feel brave and positively challenged to push themselves out of their comfort zone. They have a deeper understanding of inequality, how it affects them, and ways to challenge it
- > Through our programmes and training, young women and girls can apply their personal growth and the development of new skills to become leaders in their own lives and society to shape decisions that impact their futures



Connecting Voices and Experiences



We value diverse experiences and understand that young women and people of marginalised genders will experience inequality differently. Our work is guided by the young women that we work with and aims to address the intersecting root causes of inequality and discrimination by amplifying underrepresented voices.

- > Young women and girls build and experience supportive and meaningful relationships with others in their community and feel part of a wider movement through our programmes, advisory panel and the development of a new membership offer
- > By continuing to cultivate existing community partnerships and establishing new ones, we reach more young women, enhance their experience and create a wider impact. Communities are receptive of young women's voices, projects and research outputs and demonstrate a willingness to make change
- > Our digital platforms amplify the voices of young women and girls, linking them to partner organisations and activists across Scotland. Young women and girls are informed on feminist issues we face both in Scotland and globally



Mobilising Collective Action

We foster networks across Scotland to mobilise collective action. We recognise that challenging inequality can be an isolating experience. Peer support and building communities are at the heart of all that we do.

- > Through our feminist campaigns and communications, young women and girls are aware of and feel connected to the wider feminist movement in Scotland and internationally. They form positive connections, supportive peer relationships and networks of friendship and allyship

- > Young women and girls are inspired to nurture empathy and solidarity, think critically, take action, and build movements through our programmes, research, safe spaces and membership
- > Young women and girls participate in the design and delivery of our work and co-design the future strategic direction of the movement. Our work is led for young women by young women through advisory panels, participatory research and young women on our board of trustees
- > Young women and girls lead a movement that is intersectional and inclusive. We build partnerships with feminist allies & stand in solidarity with other social movements to achieve change

Challenging Systemic Inequality



Our work equips young women and girls with skills, networks, and a platform to challenge systemic inequality. We build an open and inclusive network leading strategic and political change through activism, research, training and campaigns.

- > Young women and girls' voices are heard, valued and respected, informing policies on matters that affect them through our programmes, research and campaigns
- > Young women and girls have access to resources, networks and platforms through our movement supporting them to take up decision-making and leadership roles
- > Organisations value our expertise and gain the confidence from our partnerships to embed feminist practices in their own operations
- > Conducting and disseminating innovative, evidence-based and young women-led research and influencing will ensure that businesses, service providers, policy teams and decision-makers have the necessary knowledge and gender-disaggregated data to inform actions and recommendations on implementing intersectional feminist policies, services and practices
- > Broadening the scope of our feminist thought leadership, media coverage and public affairs to reach more decision-makers and support their receptiveness to young women's input to create systemic change, redress power dynamics and include young women in policies, services and practices by design



Inspiring Feminist Wellbeing

We inspire collective feminist wellbeing by weaving joy, compassion, empathy, and kindness through everything we do. We challenge the culture of overworking and burnout and see rest and self-care as a form of collective resistance.

- > Young women and girls are supported to nurture their own wellbeing, the wellbeing of others and the wellbeing of our planet through our co-designed programmes, spaces, research and campaigns
- > The Young Women's Movement is a safe, nurturing and fulfilling work environment where people and their wellbeing are prioritised. We place the wellbeing of our staff, board members, programme participants and everyone we work with at the heart of our organisation by continuing to assess, refine and improve our internal working policies
- > We model participatory approaches for others to learn from and build capacity through access to resources, training and research. Organisations, businesses, policy and decision-makers have increased knowledge and capacity to implement wellbeing feminist approaches



The Young Women's Movement stands ready, with our ambitious new strategy, to support the young women and girls of Scotland lead the future of feminism. We are equipped with the vision, passion and drive to ensure that all young women and girls are meaningfully heard, valued and supported to lead collective action and enact transformational change towards gender equality.





Will you
join us?

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**THE YOUNG
WOMEN'S
MOVEMENT** 

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