

## Katie Bradley 07.06.25

**Interviewer:** My name is Alba McVicar-Reyes and I'm here with Julia Danielsson and I am interviewing Katie Bradley for the Young Women's Movement, Young Women Remember project. To begin, Katie, can you please tell me your full name, where you're from and your previous role with YWCA Scotland?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I am Katie, Katie Bradley. I am originally from Glasgow, but I moved to Paisley about six years ago and I really put roots down there and it was in Paisley and Renfrewshire that I joined the Young Women Lead Movement, which was a programme to kind of bring people together as a local community.

**Interviewer:** Did you grow up in Paisley as well?

**Interviewee:** No, I've got roots in Paisley. My mum's from Paisley and then I lived all over. It wasn't until I came back in 2022, no it was 2019 and I started Young Women Lead in 2022 and it wasn't until then that I really started settling and finding a community and stopped moving around because I actually think Young Women Lead got me interested in community as a concept.

**Interviewer:** Can you talk to me a little bit about your background in education?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so I went to art school, I left school at 15, really young and I actually went to Impact Arts for a bit, that put me on the artistic course. I've got kind of chronic health issues and that's always impacted me accessing education and there's been big gaps and it's left me at times not knowing kind of what path to take and it's only really been the past couple of years or since Young Women Lead that I've really kind of been on a path of knowing what I want to do. So I've done my degree in contemporary art and I would like to do a master's in art and ecology so that I can continue to try and improve communities artistically.

**Interviewer:** That's stunning, thank you. Could you talk to me a little bit about your current job or any role that you're currently in?

**Interviewee:** So right now I am an arts development worker at a tiny little community art space in Girvan. Um, again that is something that Young Women Lead has had a direct impact on because I'm able to put on my CV that I've done these community projects and I've worked with various different types of people, I've engaged with different organisations so that's massively helped me in the job that I'm doing now, which is, yeah, it's something I'm really happy doing so I feel like I've found what I'm supposed to be doing as a direct result of Young Women Lead.

**Interviewer:** That's stunning, thank you. Could you tell me about the year that you joined the organisation, what year was this?

**Interviewee:** It was 2022, about March time and I'd had a really rough time through that winter and I just had, I was unemployed, nothing, like not a clue if I was going to stick to art

or what to do and I was scrolling through Instagram and the advert came up for it and it really, like the start of the year was so rubbish for me and nothing was going on and Young Women Lead sort of kicked off this crazy year full of amazing opportunities so by June we were in parliament with, like meeting really interesting people from all over the Young Women movement and it was just so empowering and so yeah that was in 2022.

**Interviewer:** So you joined Young Women Lead in 2022, could you tell me a little bit more about the project, maybe what the original idea for it was and what the actual outcome was in the end?

**Interviewee:** Yeah so we quickly identified that there was kind of gaps and we were sitting talking about gaps in safe spaces for women plus in Renfrewshire and we kept kind of saying organisations that others didn't know and we'd be like do you know about this, do you know, we'd be like no and we thought we need a place to correlate all these resources so that women have an accessible place to go to if they need access to healthcare or mental health support or even period products or anything like that and so we decided that the best way to do that was to make almost like a digital map and we made, so we made an app, this was done by the younger girls in the group so we had girls that were about 17 and I was like you know in my late 20s and they'd done so much work with the kind of making of the app and the programming of it and all that, I did more the kind of advertising and the writing and stuff but they really, they worked so hard and we had QR codes. So it was, I think originally we had wanted a kind of directory that was like a solid thing and then we decided actually we're going to just do QR codes because then we can get more of them printed and more out so we had our QR code stickers and we had our leaflets, we called the project *Where Are You Going?* and again we used, as the graphics for it, we used maps of Renfrewshire and we chose different colour palettes. Um, I got the opportunity to actually do the kind of branding and marketing of it which was so much fun and I got to do things that, I hadn't really worked on Canva to design Instagram posts and I hadn't really done a lot of things like that so it really expanded my skills in that way of, gave me the confidence to do these things I think. So, yeah, it was really great and the community was really supportive of it, everybody you know really got behind it and we set up an Instagram and I think the app is still available today but we've not updated the resources for a while but yeah we basically made an interactive map for women of Renfrewshire just so that they could pinpoint where services were close to them and yeah it was a really fun experience.

**Interviewer:** That sounds amazing, could you maybe describe to us what that day in parliament was like for you guys?

**Interviewee:** Yeah it was so much fun, we got the train through, I got the train through with my friend and I think the group kind of went... We all met at parliament and there was loads of other women from all different Young Women Lead groups all over Scotland and kind of more kind of like people from way back that had joined the Young Women's Movement from different programmes, you know, from 10-15 years ago in various capacities and it was just such a lovely atmosphere, we were really, I don't know, made to feel as if we'd really done something very important which was lovely. We got a chance to meet a lot of really interesting people, we got a chance to meet quite a lot of MPs, I can't remember their names, it was a really amazing but quite overwhelming day because it was music and there

was spoken word poetry, it was just a lovely, lovely time. Young Women Lead also made sure that we all got home properly in taxis and things because we were all going to different places, so they were really great throughout the whole process of the travel and supporting us on the actual day and it was so much fun.

**Interviewer:** Sounds like a stellar day to be fair [laughing].

**Interviewee:** It was great yeah.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask did you or your cohort ever get any feedback on the impact that this project had directly on the women of Renfrewshire?

**Interviewee:** We worked a lot with an organisation called Kairos and they are an organisation focused on women plus in Renfrewshire and they had actually taken a lot of the leaflets and gave them to the volunteers so they have people coming into their services and they were mentioned in the app and they were, yeah, so they were able to kind of give the QR codes out to the volunteers. I think a lot of the volunteers, it was things that they hadn't known previously that existed quite close to them and so yeah I think that we definitely, I don't know, it was quite hard because we felt kind of like we put the app out there but maybe we should have considered a better way for the public to feedback but we wanted to kind of keep it anonymous for people you know that maybe didn't want to be known, so it's quite difficult to gauge directly the impact of it but I know just from organisations like Kairos that a lot of women did access it. We did have, I can't remember the number, I think we did have numbers of how many people had had used it and it was in the hundreds how many people had accessed it so I think it would have made some sort of impact. It definitely impacted the lives of the participants that were actually doing the project as well, so yeah I think it did have quite a good impact.

**Interviewer:** Great, and speaking about the participants of this project, can you tell us a little bit about the dynamic amongst your cohort or your wee community that came out of this project?

**Interviewee:** Yeah everybody, everybody was kind of nervous at first and then I think Young Women Lead were really good at, the kind of facilitators which were Laurie and Elena and they were really great, really welcoming and they did really good icebreakers so I very quickly felt like I was amongst, no matter what age they were, I was amongst people that would understand. I think I started to feel quite, like hearing feedback from the younger girls of how things were at school and how they felt unsafe in their area made me feel very protective of them because I was at the older end of the scale so that very much pushed me to want to do this project because I thought this is for younger people, we need to be working to make things better, so it was, I definitely, I mean I made friends there that I still am best friends with now and I'm still in contact with pretty much like most of the remaining group that we had at the end. They've all went on to do really great things and I think there was a double edge with actually feeling also a wee bit sad that things were still not, it seemed like some of the problems they were having were ones that I'd had as a younger girl and it was kind of like this is getting frustrating now that things have to change

so it was a really nice dynamic and we all got on really well, there was never any issues or we learned to collaborate really well during the project.

**Interviewer:** Just to kind of circle back really quick, you mentioned that this specific project targeted women plus in Renfrew obviously, could you maybe describe what that meant to you guys at the time?

**Interviewee:** So at the time we put women plus because we wanted it to be inclusive of trans women and non-binary people as well and so that was, it's the same with a lot of organisations, the plus is kind of symbolic of that so that's, we wanted to make the project as inclusive as possible for all types of women because that's what society is made of is all types of different women, so yeah, it was to make it a safe space but also inclusive.

**Interviewer:** So would you say inclusivity was one of the core values of Young Women Lead 2022?

**Interviewee:** Yeah absolutely, it really was and I have my own health conditions, a few other girls had the same sort of thing so accessibility became important and even during the project, we wanted, we made leaflets that briefly mentioned some of the resources just in case people didn't have internet access for the QR codes so we really tried to take into consideration accessibility, also make the kind of branding of the leaflets something that would be accessible to both older and younger women and, yeah accepting also people's different, different people's lived experience so we had people in school, we had people that were you know, unemployed, we had people that were employed but really, really busy and we had to kind of adjust the way we were working around that, so yeah we wanted, the way we worked was inclusive and I think that that blended into the project making that also quite inclusive too.

**Interviewer:** You said that you had seen the advert pop up on your Instagram feed, had you ever heard about the Young Women's Movement before?

**Interviewee:** Honestly, no I hadn't, I actually think, I don't even think I followed the page, I'm sure it was an advert that came up and I'd seen a lot of things that were the bracket of 16 to 25 and this was 16 to 30 and I thought I fit into that bracket so it was completely random that I came across Young Women Lead so I hadn't really heard of it previously, we never, in school and stuff like that and I went to an all-girls school and we never had heard of, or I had never heard of this project so I'm really glad that I found it just in the nick of time at the end of my 20s so.

**Interviewer:** That's like fate.

**Interviewee:** Yeah it felt like that, I honestly felt like fate finding the advert.

**Interviewer:** Can I also ask where you were based while you guys were working on Young Women Lead 2022?

**Interviewee:** We mostly, it was mostly Paisley, kind of centred in the town, so the first session was at a kind of hotel within Paisley and then we used the spaces of very kind organisations that would give us space, um, we worked at the YMCA on Paisley High Street and they gave us a room for a day and Young Women Lead would always cater, you know, so we would have things to eat and they would work around our, you know, I can't have gluten and things like that so they were so, you know, accepting and, you know, accommodating for us and then we also worked in Kairos quite a lot which again is in the centre of Paisley, I think a lot of people... It covered Renfrewshire so there were some people coming from different parts of Renfrewshire. I actually think that I was the closest, I live in Paisley and I think me and my friend Megan were the only two that lived in Paisley because Renfrewshire can spread quite far and a lot of resources are focused on the town and we did want to make sure that this was inclusive of all of Renfrewshire, like Elderslie and all these other, you know, places that lie outside the town.

**Interviewer:** Could you tell us a little bit about what the neighbourhood and the community itself that you were obviously directly helping, what was it like?

**Interviewee:** It was, I think Paisley, it can get quite a bad reputation sometimes but I really fell in love with the place when I moved there because people have a really great sense of community and they have a real openness to chip in and help and they're interested in engaging and everybody I think in Paisley, I don't know, a lot of the, you speak to a lot of the older people and they've seen the decline of Paisley and it used to be, you know, as busy as Glasgow and now it's completely, there's empty shops and it's really sad. So I think, yeah, I think the area is definitely getting a bit more funding now and I think the will of the community is making it a more, a better place. There is still a long way to go in terms of, you know, women's safety and kind of, you know, feminist town planning and things like that. That was something that we briefly discussed kind of looking at but, yeah, it's a work in progress but it's got a wonderful community and I think we all didn't maybe realise how great the community was until we started doing the project and going around different businesses, handing out leaflets and everybody was so interested and helpful and willing to help. So it was, yeah, it kind of rooted us back to our community.

**Interviewer:** That's amazing. Could you share maybe any more recent examples of what this community outreach kind of looks like in Paisley? Not just the Young Women's Movement but even Kairos or any other organisation?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so at Kairos, after the Young Women's Movement, me and someone else started volunteering at Kairos and then that's led on to things, there was a Kindness and Caring Carnival and it was, it's a kind of a safe space for recovering addicts and things like that. It's like a safe fair that's completely no alcohol and just a nice kind place. So I got to volunteer at that with children and there's been, yeah, I've done some, you know, work with, Jupiter Artland came to Paisley and because I'd done a lot within the community, you know, previously, I was able to kind of get a job with them and work at an art installation and again that was talking and engaging with the public. So there's definitely a lot of projects going on right now that are focused on bringing people back to the town because it's very, there's not much to do, it's very empty, so yeah, it's kind of, it has led on to do, to quite a lot of stuff. The Star Project as well, we run different festivals and little stalls and we

have like a pantry that you can go in and it's kind of like a food bank. So I was able to link up with all these places through Young Women Lead, which was really great because I still have contact with them now.

**Interviewer:** And would you say that any or all of these projects kind of align with your personal values and your core beliefs about community outreach and what's right?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, absolutely. I think, I don't know, I don't know what I thought about community before I moved to Paisley and did the project. I think it was something I just didn't really think much about. I was from Glasgow, I'd always moved around and to be in a space where you're kind of like, yeah, I was, I became very settled and my definition of community definitely grew and I, it opened up a kind of opportunity for me to blend my artistic background in contemporary art with community art and it was, it's really put me on a path that I'm really happy to be on because I don't think it was something I thought about before I moved to Paisley and did the project. So it kind of combined lots of my loves into one coherent path that I could follow, which was really good.

**Interviewer:** That's really cool. Could you tell us how long you were involved with Young Women Lead or how long the project took overall?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so we started in March and we finished up in September. I think we were maybe actually a wee bit late finishing up because I can't remember what it was, it was someone's commitments or something, but yeah, so I can't remember how many months that is. It was over the course of the summer and we got to go to Parliament in the June, so that was sort of like the halfway sort of point. We met up about, we did meet up quite a lot, so we had a WhatsApp chat that was quite fully active and a Jam board as well and we kind of met up about four times, four or five times in different organisations over the course of that time.

**Interviewer:** Would you be involved with another similar project with the Young Women's Movement if you could?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, absolutely, if I was able to continue doing any work with the project because I thought it was so valuable, so yes, absolutely.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything you regret or maybe resent from your participation in this project?

**Interviewee:** Definitely not resent. I think, no, I don't think so. I mean, when I think back to it, it just seems like a lovely memory of a lovely time for me and I think that Young Women Lead were very good with the project of, you know, we did want an outcome of the project, obviously, but we weren't being pushed to have like a really solid, you know, thing and it was actually a kind of space to see what worked and what didn't work, so I don't think there's anything that I would, maybe some more public feedback would have been a bit better, but I think the actual project that we did was great, so there's no resenting or regret there.

**Interviewer:** I know that you've already touched on this a little bit, but could you speak a little bit more on the personal impact that the project had on you? Anything from the skills you gained, the confidence you gained, the people you met, networking, all of that?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I mean, it's quite hard to begin because it has done so much for me at the time that I joined. I was unemployed, I wasn't really doing anything, I'd suffered with like mental health issues and had a really difficult time and even going to the first session, I was so anxious and just having something to do, like, you know, got me back into that way of feeling valued and feeling like I had some sort of purpose and then very quickly, you know, by the June that I was employed and I got a job working in an arts commissioning organisation as an access support worker and then started volunteering at Kairos and joined their human rights and equalities collective and I don't think I would have done any of those things without Young Women Lead because I just didn't know how to go about it, I didn't know how to approach these things so it really, it connected me up with so many organisations that I've then went on to work with down the line. We also got a chance to do, we had really, little workshops within our programme so we had a woman that was like a kind of public speaking trainer person that taught us how to do public speaking a bit better and we had someone who was like a life coach that, you know, gave us some tips on how to keep our lives organised and things planned. We had, yeah, we had a little kind of, it seemed like Young Women Lead really wanted us to develop our skills and it's definitely something, you know, it's on my CV, it's very prominently mentioned because it's something that I'm so proud of and it's something that has continued to just manifest more opportunities as times went on so it's been such a valuable thing for me to have done.

**Interviewer:** That's amazing for sure, yeah. Do you have any idea more or less what was going on more broadly with the organisation while you were involved? So outside of Young Women Lead I mean.

**Interviewee:** Not massively, I think when we, I think a few of us, like we hadn't heard of what this was and we kind of joined, obviously we're in Paisley and it was kind of based all over Scotland so we weren't really, not massively and then we met people at Parliament and we started following Instagram, you know, things and seeing more posts and getting to know, you know, at the Parliament party I actually met people from different Young Women Leads at different sides of the country and I now have them on Instagram and we keep in touch and yeah, so, I don't think we were aware previously but it was kind of like opening a door and all of a sudden there was like all these different things going on and different opportunities and so yeah we were quite, I think at, maybe times we did feel like we were in our own little bubble because we got on so well, we were focused on the project but yeah we definitely learned a bit more about the organisation as we were there.

**Interviewer:** I know you mentioned Megan, obviously your best friend who you're very much in touch with these days but do you keep in touch with anyone else that was in your cohort?

**Interviewee:** Yeah I still, I keep in touch with Marissa and Eloise and I still, it's mostly just through Instagram but it's really nice to be able to see kind of what they're doing and where they've went with things and yeah like I think even the facilitator that we had isn't working

with that, you know, so I've kind of kept vaguely in touch with them but it's really nice to see everyone go off and do different things and then obviously yeah Megan was the one that we ended up forming a really close friendship so yeah it's gave me a lot.

**Interviewer:** Cool, would you say that the rest of your cohort have a similar background to you in terms of being you know arts-based or not?

**Interviewee:** No I mean actually not really, me and Megan were the ones that went to art school and everybody else had a really interesting background so Marissa had been very involved with almost like politics and local organisations like carers and youth volunteering and Marissa was really proactive already in a lot of groups when she came to us and the two, some of the younger ones were still in school but they were quite proactive in after-school clubs and things like that. Eloise was a musician and she, I think it was trumpet she played, I think it was, but she was so busy and I think she'd done like really impressive jobs for like different organisations and then you know she'd done quite a lot. So, we were all quite different but I think the difference in backgrounds really made the group work because everyone had different skills and everyone could, you know, I come at things from a more kind of creative focus whereas someone else might see a kind of more logical side to it so I think the group worked really well because there was such a variety of different skills and different backgrounds so that's what made it a strong group.

**Interviewer:** So would you say the kind of diversity in backgrounds if you will also helped you build up your skills because you kind of took in from everyone else or am I reaching?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, no it absolutely did and obviously I think it was the first time that I'd worked on a project with people with such a vast age range and I'd facilitated before where I was in a different kind of position for younger people but this was when I was working on a project on an equal level with people of all different ages and yeah it really helped my skills and learning to work with different, different people and I think it also really developed the younger kind of members as well that maybe hadn't worked on a project with older people that weren't teachers and things so yeah it did I think.

**Interviewer:** Did you guys do any activities that were not related to Young Women Lead, together as a team building kind of thing?

**Interviewee:** We had a day that was, yeah, we went to the YMCA in Paisley and we had a kind of like team building thing where we weren't allowed to talk but we had to make an object or a kind of thing [cough] we couldn't speak to each other we just had to like point and I don't think we could write either so it was about learning to use other forms of expression and it was it was so much fun and we the group that I was in made like a kind of fashion line out of pipe cleaners and like a hat and a bag and it was just it was a bit mad but it was so much fun and then we also went out for food when we were done we were we all went out for like a, a wee celebration of some food which was lovely at the end and it was quite sad when it was ending as well, so yeah we did we did a couple of things yeah.

**Interviewer:** That sounds great I'm sure that helped as well to build those really long lasting relationships with them.

**Interviewee:** Yeah absolutely, it was, it all felt very comfortable and natural it never felt, you know, awkward or forced like these kind of like cheesy tacky icebreaker things it all felt very like authentic which was nice.

**Interviewer:** Were there any men involved in the movement?

**Interviewee:** Not that I remember, no, no there wasn't.

**Interviewer:** Fair enough. What was your main reason for moving on from the movement was it just that the project had ended you were looking for other opportunities?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so the project and like I said, the project kind of kick-started a lot of other things in my life so by the time the project ended in the September I was really, really busy and I'd just worked at the Edinburgh Fringe and I was working part-time but quite a tough job [cough] and yeah, I kind of, once that project ended I kept my eyes open for other opportunities but I've not applied for any other opportunities because I've actually been really busy since doing the project. It's something that I would love to, I mean I am older now but it's something that I would love to, to go back and do and help in any way but yeah I do keep my eyes out for what's going on.

**Interviewer:** Yeah I'm sure they'd love to have you again.

**Interviewee:** No I'd love to do it, it was yeah it was a great experience.

**Interviewer:** Are you still involved to any degree with the Young Women's Movement outside of this interview?

**Interviewee:** I'm not at the moment, but it's definitely something that I'd like to go back and do. I still get newsletters, I still keep updated with their Instagram posts, but no, not currently at the moment. Which, yeah, it is something I'd like to return to.

**Interviewer:** I'm sure there'll be a spot available at some point.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I hope so. So many things going on.

**Interviewer:** Could you talk to me a little bit about what originally motivated you to join the organisation? What kind of drew you in?

**Interviewee:** I think it's community focused, so that was, and I think also the fact that at the time, the circumstances that I was in and I just came from, the notion of it being a kind of feminist, inclusive movement was really attractive because it was a time that I particularly needed to feel safe. Maybe if I'd went straight into a busy job, it wouldn't have worked. It was a really great sort of stepping stone for me because, yeah, it was definitely the kind of, the word inspiring is thrown around a lot, but it was really empowering and inspiring to be a part of, even the fact that it's kind of called the movement and things like that. It felt like being part of something, which was really nice.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel that there's a connection between your work or studies before the Young Women's Movement and what you have accomplished while working with us?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I remember I went to art school and during my art degree, we briefly touched on community art and I didn't fully understand it at the time. I was kind of like, is that not more in the scope of social work or the council or, you know, I didn't really understand how the things could be blended and yeah, I think I was kind of like, it was the missing piece that I, that I needed. I was kind of like, that was something I wanted to do. I wanted to be more community based after a few years of being very much in the kind of contemporary art sphere that can be very elitist and very, yeah, like exclusive and I don't like that attitude. So yeah, that was, yeah, I think that [laughing].

**Interviewer:** So maybe right before you joined, could you maybe tell me what your hopes were for the organisation and the project at the time?

**Interviewee:** I think I wanted to engage more with the community and also meet new people. So yeah, I kind of moved to Paisley, I didn't really know anybody there. I had had a couple of jobs, but I didn't have any kind of, all my friends were in Glasgow and I did feel quite isolated. So meeting new people was a huge thing on the list for me and also meeting like-minded people that wanted to, you know, be engaged with the community as well. I felt like, yeah, that was kind of, yeah, a really good thing for joining.

**Interviewer:** Just a very general question. Could you tell us about your favourite memory while working on this project with the Young Women's Movement?

**Interviewee:** My favourite, I think it would be the Parliament Party because it was just, it was such a fun day and it was really sunny and everyone was dressed up and it was lovely but also, there is quite a few memories, the last day that we were kind of wrapping up the project and we had all our leaflets and we went round, we did quite a lot of walking, we went round loads of organisations in Paisley, loads of cafes and stopped and chatted with everyone, giving them leaflets and then we went for food. So it was quite a sad day because we knew it was ending, but it was a lovely last day to have because everyone seemed excited about the project.

**Interviewer:** I can imagine you were quite satisfied to finally see it come to fruition?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, it was really like, it all seemed very up in the air when we started as if, can we actually do this? Can we actually, you know, make a whole project that's going to be an actual thing? And then when we got there, it was, yeah, it felt really satisfying to complete it.

**Interviewer:** Did you learn any life lessons that you've carried on from the Young Women's Movement and your involvement?

**Interviewee:** I think, yeah, I think just being a bit more bold to approach things. So I think I was very, very anxious and would kind of freeze when, you know, if someone asked me to do something and I'd kind of freeze and panic. I think it taught me to take a bit more

initiative and also taught me, you know, the community's mine as well and it's something that I'm part of and I can have an influence in a positive way over that and I can have a say in how my community operates, and I can also, you know, if you want to start a project and you can do it, you can just do things and you can get other people involved and people are actually more helpful and willing than you think they're gonna be. So definitely it made me more of a self-starter than I had been previously to the project.

**Interviewer:** Could you tell us a bit more specifically about the opportunities that were available to you because or after your involvement with the Young Women's Movement, like Kairos, for example?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so after the Young Women's Movement, I became a volunteer at Kairos and that really kind of impacted, you know, the work that I did there and then I started working for an organisation called Unlimited. So I was working with disabled artists and a lot of those artists, being disabled artists, they did quite community-based projects and a lot of kind of almost sometimes like political things, like challenging, you know, society's view about disability and stuff like that. So a lot of the skills that I picked up, even things like I hadn't used a computer, like I had my phone and stuff before I started Young Women Lead, but then I got the opportunity to use like laptops and do things. So there was like kind of administrative skills that improved and there was also my ability to talk to different types of people. Also, yeah, like in talking about my kind of technical skills in Zoom, I had no experience in doing video calls, even through the pandemic, I'd had a couple on my phone, but doing like Zoom meetings where you're speaking to like lots of people and yeah, I got a lot of experience doing that with Young Women Lead, which directly influenced my next job, which was completely remote, so everything was on Zoom, and yeah, I don't think without Young Women Lead, I would have went on to get that position. Yeah, so it's really been the catalyst to a lot of different other opportunities.

**Interviewer:** Is this job that you got after working with the movement, Kairos or Unlimited, or is it something else?

**Interviewee:** I volunteer at Kairos, and that was an organisation that there's different kind of parts to it. So I was part of the Equalities Collective, and then my employment that was paid employment was Unlimited, which was a remote position. So by the end of the year, I had kind of Young Women Lead going on, volunteering and was in employment, and it was a lot, it went kind of from zero to a hundred really quickly but to be in paid employment for, you know, that quickly, just from kind of having the experience from Young Women Lead, because I didn't have any community experience previous to that. So that had a direct impact on me getting kind of paid employment. So, yeah, it was really beneficial.

**Interviewer:** Did the Young Women's movement influence your life outside of any kind of work context?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I think it definitely made me think about younger women that are growing up now. I don't think, I think, you know, you leave school, you don't really think about it, and I see like people in their school uniform, and I'm like, oh my God, people are at school, because I don't go anymore, but it really made me think about how to improve

things for younger generations, because it does seem in a lot of ways we've moved forward, but there's a lot of things like violence against women and girls that is not moving in the right direction. So, I think it has had a general impact on the way I think about the future more, and what it's gonna be like for these young girls growing up with AI and all these different social media things. So it's definitely made me think more deeply about issues like that. Yeah, it's had quite a big impact on how I view, yeah, how I view things in Scotland for women.

**Interviewer:** Would you say you had any really big achievements while you were working on Young Women Lead?

**Interviewer:** I think we, like we had the Daily Record, we had a kind of article in that, which was quite cool. Yeah, I think that was quite a big achievement. I'm trying to think of what else. Yeah, probably that was the biggest achievement. We had really great feedback from organisations. So we had, yeah, we had great feedback. I'm trying to think of all the organisations but yeah, I think probably the biggest achievement was definitely being in the paper and seeing it in print.

**Interviewer:** That's fab. Did you hear of any of the wider organisation's achievements or milestones while you were a part of it?

**Interviewee:** I can't quite, because it's, how many years, it's been three years since I've done it and there's been so much that's happened. I can't quite remember if, because there's always so much going on within the organisation that you hear one thing and then it's something else but I think I remember hearing that Young Women Lead was expanding. So I know that we, you know, they were talking about, well, we've now got funding for places, you know, further north and, you know, it was gonna be a programme that was going to continue to run, which was great to hear because after we did it, we were like, this is something that should keep going. So I know they did one in Fife. I know, I think they did one in Dundee after us, which was about sex education at school. It was a really cool project. So it was really great to hear that the project was still going and also trying to encourage more people from rural areas to access the projects. So yeah, probably that.

**Interviewer:** That's very cool [pause]. I do have a question here. Are there any photographs or objects from the time that you'd like to share with us? So I'm going to go and pick them up so you can show the camera [laughing]. If you maybe want to talk us through what they are.

**Interviewee:** So, yeah, so when we, our first day that we all met up and there was a lot of people there, we all were given these little books. Like Young Women Lead little diaries. That's my own sticker, and then this kind of, I found this like just the other day and it's actually just full of little notes. So my feelings on the first day, um... and the first line is that I felt very apprehensive about coming today and I thought I was going to be the oldest one in the group or I would come across as thick. So actually I've not read this back. This is the first time I've read this back. So that's like, wow. So yeah, I think at the time I wrote about how I hadn't been very proactive and was really nervous about coming in and not being able to participate because I was just a bit, you know, too anxious and I put everyone was so

diverse. I was amazed at how I resonated with girls that were 10 years younger. Which was, yeah, it was a really nice feeling, and then I kind of go on to say that I do have a lot of hope for the project and I will personally take away so much confidence and experience, and I'm very inspired by who I'm working with and then yeah, this little list of like the issues that we discussed, which is all around safety, and then, yeah, like even, I don't know, we filled this book with like, we got little workshops that helped us develop our skills. So this book is actually filled with like little tips and things that I've wrote down from, yeah, from their little workshops, and yeah, I just ended up learning so, so much. So this is such a nice wee book that I continue to use because I still love it, and then we made a sort of a, so we called it, yeah, it was Community Spaces, Community Places, or Community Places, Community Spaces [laughing] but we actually called it *Where Are You Going?* Because that's a bit easier to pronounce. That was more the professional title but we wanted the Where Are You Going? We wanted it to not be too inaccessible. We wanted it to look like it was, yeah, it was accessible to kind of all ages. It wasn't a kind of community group for older people or anything like that. We tried to hit the balance between accessing a kind of younger audience. So that was a little mock invitation that we done, and then starting at the book, so this is, that was me and my friend working on laptops on the floor of Kairos, and that was the day that we were writing all the descriptions for what the resources were. So we had so much writing to do that day and I think Young Women Lead actually got us pizza that day. So that was lovely, and then that was us in the middle at Parliament. So, the four of us at the left hand side are all in Young Women Lead in Paisley, and then this is Erin, who is very much, I couldn't even tell you what part because Erin's really involved with the movement in general and has done loads of great work. So we met Erin this day and again, Erin is someone that I have on Instagram and it's really nice. So Erin jumped in the photo with us, and then on the final day, this was us in Kairos with our printed material. So we've got all our QR codes ready to go out on the lamppost. I think some of them made it to as far as even Glasgow, they were every... And they stayed for ages. They were up, they managed to survive for a couple of years, I still see some of them in Paisley, and yeah, this was a photo that was used in the Daily Record for our project. So yeah, that was a really nice day, and also blended organisations helping each other out. So I think in turn, Young Women Lead actually done a workshop for Kairos, and I can't remember what it was on, but I think it was about looking at data and data analysis from surveys and things like that. So there was a kind of skill share exchange where, you know, Kairos helped out Young Women Lead and Young Women Lead repaid the favour. So it was lovely, and these are, yeah, these are kind of lovely memories that we have.

**Interviewer:** I love that. Yeah. Thank you so much for showing us.

**Interviewee:** No worries.

**Interviewer:** Do you think there were any major political or social events happening while you were involved in the organisation that had an impact on the project and how it came out in the end?

**Interviewee:** I don't, I know that in 2022 we were still sort of recovering from Covid, so a lot of the younger ones had had their school really disrupted. At the time, I think it was the sort of beginning of the sort of Andrew Tate attitudes that were starting to come about online,

and yeah, even the political kind of climate, the people that were in charge, it was very, there was a sense of sort of demonising low economic areas that maybe didn't have as much money as other areas, and a demonising of people on benefits and people on disability benefits at the time, and it did feel, I think at the time, I think like I previously mentioned that when talking to the younger girls that things are still really bad and things are, you know, it's still, girls still don't necessarily feel safe walking around their neighbourhood and their area. So, it was, yeah, it was quite a lot going on. I think you could tell that a lot of the participants were like angry. They were angry at, you know, they all had their own stories of something where they couldn't access a service for mental health or they, you know, didn't feel safe in the street, and everyone had their own experiences and stories to bring, you know, to it, and I think at times we actually did have to be like, right, let's take a break and let's all take a breath because we ended up kind of inadvertently getting involved in these really intense deep chats because we had all this different lived experience but there was a sort of common thread running through all of it. That, you know, a feeling of sort of powerlessness because you're, you know, things are stacked against you as a woman, as an unemployed woman, as maybe, you know, a woman of colour or there was all these different intersections that made life difficult for each person in a different way. So I think everybody that attended was very politically motivated as in they were engaged and they wanted to know what was going on and they wanted to have a say in what was going on. I think that there was also the continuing row over groups gathering outside of abortion clinics and clinics like that, which I think at the time I don't think the buffer zone had been put in place. I think the buffer zone was still, I think, yeah, I think round about the time it was still something that was being brought up in Parliament but it was maybe not something that had been put in place directly at that point. So I think actually through Young Women Lead, I ended up getting, you know, I joined Young Women Lead and then I started seeing more organisations come up on Instagram as a result of following that path. So I ended up, yeah, following pages there. I kind of understood more about buffer zones and what was going on. So I think that was going on at the time. I think that's improved a bit now, but there was, yeah, it was quite a weird time politically and a lot of instability, especially after COVID, a lot of the young people hadn't had access to services that they should have.

**Interviewer:** Do you happen to know if anyone that you've kept in touch with after Young Women Lead has continued being involved with any social work or politically minded organisations?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so Marisa was doing a degree in, I think, social work or something like that. It was such a long time ago...And then Marisa did a placement at Kairos. So that was a kind of, yeah, direct result, and I know that Marisa is still very much involved with kind of, the movement and again, it's hard to actually keep track because everybody seems to have went on and done something. So yes, I think that Megan as well became part of Poverty Alliance and the Robertson's Trust and does a lot of work for them and yeah, again, Erin as well that's in the photograph has done a lot and is still engaged a lot with the movement. So yeah, Marisa, absolutely, and yeah, Megan as well, and myself, I'm maybe less politically involved, but definitely more community engaged but there are people that have definitely stayed within that political sphere.

**Interviewer:** Stunning, thank you. Obviously, you've mentioned that you still keep track of what the movement is kind of up to. How do you feel about the way it's evolved since you were participating in it?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I'm really, really happy about the way the movement has evolved because it's nice to see, it was so beneficial to me. It's really nice to see it continue to benefit other women in Scotland, and I think their social media campaigns, that's how I got involved, and that was what was accessible to me. So, yeah, I find them really informative. I think the work they're doing is really vital and important because it takes what's happening and puts it in a way that, you know, is informing the younger generation through social media. So I think it's really exciting the way it's evolved and it's really exciting to, you know, I'm really looking forward to seeing what's going to happen and what it's going to do.

**Interviewer:** Cool. What would you like the future of our movement to look like, ideally?

**Interviewee:** I think, ideally, we wouldn't need groups of women to be coming together to talk about these issues continuously. I think, in an ideal world, we would be able to just exist. I think, ideally, what I would like to see is more women engaged with it, as in a broader, if it keeps expanding. So I know that there's a lot of communities that are rural and they're quite cut off and things like even public transport and funding cuts has an impact on all these things and I think that, yeah, I would just like to continue to see it do what it's doing because it seems to be moving in a really good direction, and I think also making sure that it is an inclusive space for all women, particularly with the current political climate and, again, the demonising of different groups. I think it's really important that the space remains inclusive. So, yeah, I would like to see that.

**Interviewer:** So we've briefly touched on this before, but just to have it as its own kind of question, did you or do you feel that the organisation is a feminist one and why?

**Interviewee:** Yes, and I mean, I think nowadays the definition of feminism can be quite a divisive term, and it's always been, you know, it's been a term that's been used in a derogatory sense and it's been a term that women have taken as an empowerment. I think inclusive feminism, I think it's always important to keep that. I would say it is a feminist-focused organisation, but the benefits that come about from these different groups benefit everybody. So it is feminist in its focus and looking at women's issues, but women's issues affect everybody. So, yeah, it has a feminist focus, but an overall benefit, I would say, to society.

**Interviewer:** I would agree with that. Did you face any challenges at all in your time at the organisation?

**Interviewee:** I, well, you know, one thing was actually, I had been in the house quite a lot and when we first started, I realised I really needed glasses [laughing] because there was more admin things to do. There was times, yeah, there wasn't times that I kind of struggled with anything, but there was definitely times where there was things that were quite, not even stressful, but there was a lot of work to do, a lot of writing to do but there was always a lot of support with that. So any kind of, if I felt overwhelmed or anything, I always had the

facilitators to be really open and honest with, about my capacity and it was really nice to have a space to do that, where I could be completely honest and I wasn't overstretching. So, yeah, I don't think there was any massive struggles or anything like that apart from glasses.

**Interviewer:** At least you know you need glasses now.

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I ended the project with glasses, which is good.

**Interviewer:** Is this the career path you had imagined for yourself maybe 10 or 15 years ago or something like that?

**Interviewee:** No, honestly no, because I wasn't aware of how kind of broad the subject was. I wasn't really aware of how I could fit myself into community work. I'd done lots of different things, like I'd worked in Debenhams, I'd been a tattoo apprentice and that wasn't for me. I went to art school and came out very disillusioned at everyone kind of sitting around talking about concepts and not much kind of tangible things happening and I kind of got this, what's the point sort of attitude and when I found community art and community work, it sort of felt very fulfilling because it was like, yeah, it was different parts of myself. It all came combined together into one subject and yeah, it was definitely, I knew it was for me when I found it.

**Interviewer:** Have you gained any other experience in public policy ever since?

**Interviewee:** I think, I mean, I think with me, I definitely took more from the community side of things rather than the political side. I did for, I mean, I think, yeah, I think I did in terms of like things with the buffer zones and stuff like that. So I definitely, it made me more engaged of what's actually happening with regards to things like that and also women's general access in Scotland to, you know, services and sometimes they're being sent into England and things like that. So I think there's definitely a few campaigns that Young Women Lead steered me towards. I've maybe not been that involved with them, but I'm definitely more aware of them and I think politically, or I think in the future, it's definitely something I would probably be circling back to in the future because I've always been, I was in the SNP youth when I was younger and I've always been interested in, you know, that side of things but I think I got made to feel like my voice really didn't matter until I came to Young Women Lead, so.

**Interviewer:** Thank God for Young Women Lead, right? [Laughing].

**Interviewee:** I know, I know.

**Interviewer:** Have you recommended to anyone that they should start participating or volunteering in any way with the Young Women's Movement?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, pretty much, like, if anybody I meet is in that kind of age bracket or if there's like, you know, I see an opportunity on Instagram, I'll send it to somebody. Yeah, I do keep an eye on, you know, what's going on and I have told loads and loads of people about

it and can't recommend it enough. So, yeah, like, I would tell anybody to just do it because it turns into something wonderful.

**Interviewer:** Has anyone you've recommended it to followed through, maybe, actually?

**Interviewee:** I don't think so, because I was right at the end of the scale for age, so a lot of my friends were maybe just a bit too old for it. The areas as well, so after Paisley, I think it was like Fife and Dundee, so I didn't really know people that were in the locality of it but I've definitely, I've shared a lot of, like, the campaigns and a lot of the work that, you know, the reports and things like that. I've definitely sent them on to people and I've shared them on social media because I feel like all the projects that come out of, you know, the various different ones, they've all got something really important to say. So, yeah, I'm always trying to, like, promote other people, and if I do meet anybody who's, like, in that age bracket and the right, you know, area, I would definitely encourage them to, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So could you tell us a bit more about the Daily Record article?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, we didn't, I don't think anyone knew that it was actually going to happen. We all wanted to just take a group photo at the end and then a few weeks later one of our facilitators, on the WhatsApp chat was like, oh we've got an article and it was such, I remember opening it and it was such a surprise because it's like your photograph right at the top and there was a few places I'm sure there was like a Renfrewshire Live or Glasgow Live or a Renfrewshire Gazette or something like that, that ran the kind of same article. So we had, I mean because during the project we'd really been given a lot of support in reaching out to places like Renfrewshire Council and we had...Laurie, you know, the facilitators had contacts at different places so we just had all this support and again that really taught me of like it can't hurt to just send an email to these places so a lot of the time we were kind of asking and people were like yeah of course but it was, yeah, it did get shared quite far and wide which was really, really cool.

**Interviewer:** So you previously mentioned your current role, could you tell us a little bit more about what it actually means for you and what you do every day?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, so I have just started as an Arts Support Worker.... Arts Development Worker at a little place called Cragg Arts. It's in Girvan and it's very community focused, so the work that I do there is very much linked to what I did at Young Women Lead as well, where it's bringing the community together to do mostly kind of creative projects, so my job is an Arts Development Worker, but it's very engaged with the community. A lot of the skills that I learned through Young Women Lead have been invaluable to the position because I came to the job where they were really not doing so well on social media, and they didn't really know how to go about their social media approach. When I was with Young Women Lead we had set up an Instagram that I was in charge of, so I had to make posts for it and come up with ways to get other organisations engaged with us and people, you know, get the word out there, so that's had a direct impact on the work that I do now because I can then transfer their skills from Young Women Lead to my job now. I think that the experience with Young Women Lead opens my mind to how valuable it is to have a multi-organisational network when you're doing things. So, it's definitely, Young Women Lead has definitely put

me on the path to community art and community work and I've got my job now that I'm so delighted with and in between that there's been positions that it's helped me with as well. I was a Public Engagement Assistant for a while in Paisley, engaging with the local community. So, it's given me, you know, every single job position I've had since doing the programme, has been benefited by the programme, so yeah, it's been... It was a complete starting point to everything I've done since and I really credit it with putting me on the right path at the right time.

**Interviewer:** So, what would your day-to-day look like as someone who's professionally involved in community art?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, mostly when I come in, there's a bit of admin to it as well, so obviously I've got to check emails, I kind of correspond with artists that come in to do workshops for the community, so it's a case of like booking them and corresponding with them. I then kind of float about and see what needs done, it is a very much... Everybody chips in at the community centre and we have an open studio on a Friday, so we let people do their own thing and I kind of float about and if they need anything I'm there. We also at the moment are preparing for a small festival where we've displayed a lot of the artists' work that come to the centre in the shoe shop windows. So, it's very much my kind of job in the sense that every day is different. Some days I'm hanging up bits of art and some days I'm at a computer and it's very varied. You kind of just chip in, but there's a sense of family, community there and a real sense of pride in the community, which again has carried on from Young Women Lead because that initially sparked my interest in taking pride in where I live and being involved in where I live and then now when I'm in Girvan, it's such a small place that their community is their whole life and I really feel that the job that I'm doing now really aligns with who I am as a person and that's because of Young Women Lead kind of guiding me towards that.

**Interviewer:** I love that. Would you say that you're still continuing with that community outreach through social media that you started through Young Women Movement?

**Interviewee:** Yeah absolutely. Could we pick the project up again? I think that's something that we probably could do and we might do in the future. The resources just need updating, but it's definitely something that we would like to return to, particularly with funding cuts and things like that. People don't necessarily know what's available to them in their community or where to access that, so I think we would like to return to it. We'd definitely like to expand it. We've kind of spoken about that in the past, of, you know, having an event night for women and different things like that. It has sparked a lot of ideas and it's definitely something that I have taken parts of into my own artistic practise as well. I'm really interested in art therapy and using creativity as a means to help mental health and again, with Young Women, there's a lot of opportunity there, you women that... Around, you know, body issues and all sorts of issues that women face. There's a lot of opportunities there to create spaces for them and resources for them.

**Interviewer:** Do you see yourself staying in this role for a long time?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I definitely do. It was always kind of, from Young Women Lead and I saw the potential of people like Laurie and Elena and that really gave me an example of what I

wanted to do, combining my love of community and arts and also that feeling of being part of something bigger. So yeah, absolutely, I'll definitely be there a while.

**Interviewer:** Amazing, love that. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

**Interviewee:** Just, I don't know, maybe, probably a thank you. A massive thank you to the Young Women Movement and Young Women Lead. To the facilitators I had at the time, Laurie and Elena, because, it sounds so dramatic to say, I don't know where I would be without the programme, but I really don't, at the point that I accessed the programme, I was not in a good place and the difference, the turnaround in my self-esteem by the end of the programme was huge. So I would encourage, particularly after Covid, and people being stuck in the house, I would tell anybody if there's an opportunity that fits with your, you know, interests and you know, your age demographic, just get involved because it's been so beneficial and it's had a lasting effect on my adult life.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much for doing this interview with us.

**Interviewee:** No problem.

**Interviewer:** It's been lovely.

**Interviewee:** Thank you.