

Libby Smith 26.07.25

Interviewer: My name is Julia Danielsson and I'm interviewing Libby Smith for the Young Women's Movement Young Women Remember Project. To begin, please could you tell me your full name, where you're from and your previous role or current role within YMCA Scotland and the Young Women's Movement.

Interviewee: Okay, I am known as Libby Smith but my name is Elizabeth Smith and I am the Business and Finance Coordinator for the Young Women's Movement and there are a few other roles that I've had, I'm not going to go into detail right now because I don't think that's what you're asking me for. So, yeah, that's it in a nutshell.

Interviewer: I'm going to start with just some quick questions about you. So, how old are you?

Interviewee: I am 47 years old.

Interviewer: And where were you born? Where did you grow up?

Interviewee: I was born in Glasgow, started my life in Castlemilk and then I moved into South Lanarkshire in Rutherglen and I still live there now.

Interviewer: What jobs have you had in your life for YWCA Scotland and previously to that?

Interviewee: Do you want all of them?

Interviewer: As much as you would like to give.

Interviewee: Right, okay, right, well, I started when I left school and went straight into full-time work when I was younger and I started off at a tool distribution company, moved on into a debt collection agency, then I went into a business start-up company and then I moved into community work. I found an organisation where they did a lot more in community and that's where my passion lay and I'm like, right, this is where I want to be and I found an opportunity where I had that and I was doing a lot of work with refugees and I was the organiser of Scotland's first refugee convention, which was held in the teacher building in St Enoch's Square. A few years back now, but it was, yeah, few years back but I remember organising that and it was a really big thing at the time because it was something we'd never seen and that just grew my passion again. I want to be working with these people and I've done a lot of work with refugees over the years and then an opportunity came up with Glasgow YWCA and it was all based around working with refugees and helping them develop their skills and that was right up my street so I applied for that role and that was the start of my journey with YWCA, which was in 2007.

Interviewer: And when did you move into community work, around what time was that?

Interviewee: When I moved into community work I was very early on in my career. It was only a few years before... When I was doing community work that started when I was

working in the Gorbals. So that would be... Oh here goes my memory, that would have been round about the year 2000, give or take a year or two, it would be round about then that all started.

Interviewer: And was that when the work you mentioned you were doing with refugees, when you moved into some other community work?

Interviewee: Yeah well at that time that's when I started working with refugees, we had a, it was a new refugee project that started and it was one of the first ever refugee projects that were going and from that we developed things, grew the projects and within that time arranged the first refugee convention and built everything from there and as things progressed I then came across the job with Glasgow YWCA at the time and that's what drew me into the organisation.

Interviewer: So you said already but then how old were you when you joined the organisation then?

Interviewee: I would have been 27.

Interviewer: 27.

Interviewee: Was I 27? Might need to give or take a year or two, I might have been 29. Sorry I'm trying to put all my numbers together. It was...hold on, right, it was in 2007, I was 29 years old when I started with Glasgow YWCA and that was the PA to the coordinator role, so the coordinator ran everything that went on in Glasgow YWCA. I took on the PA role, assisting them in the work that they were doing but it all developed very quickly into, it grew arms and legs and became many other things but I expect that to happen with it being a charity. When it's a charity and things need to be done, do you know what, if you're one of the workers you're going to get the work done. So [laughing] I was a PA at the start, I then became the volunteer manager, I was the health and safety officer, I was the internal IT support, I was the facilitator. I had so many jobs I don't even think I could rhyme all of them up, it was just basically something needs done, it's nobody's job right well I'll do it. It was like that at one point, it was just about making this work with what we have but you know what we made it work and it was very much a community for so many women coming into our centre. It was amazing, it was so much fun.

Interviewer: It sounds like a real experience too.

Interviewee: It was. We also had in the building at the beginning we had a creche, so we were a learning centre and we had a computing class going on over here, an ESOL class going on in there, arts and crafts going on in here. There were so many different learning opportunities for people and when they come in to do their learning their children got creche and we managed to get the funding in place to provide that free of charge which allowed people who maybe wouldn't have had the opportunity otherwise to come in and do some learning, make some changes for themselves and it gives the children an opportunity to have a little social life with all the other kids while they are in there too. So yeah it was very family orientated back then and so many women just treated that building like it was such a big part of their life. They would be there Tuesday or their Thursday afternoon where

they are coming in and doing their learning and they all became friends with each other and you could see it happening, all these friendships were developing and then they would meet each other outside of the centre. It was really, really good and it was so busy but yeah it was fun.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you got involved through this role but how did you find out about this role existing in the first place and how did you find out about the organisation?

Interviewee: Well I was in another job and I was browsing, I found it by accident, it wasn't something anyone told me about. I was just browsing because I was looking for my next opportunity and I came across that one and it jumped right out at me and I was like right this is mine and I went and nabbed it [laughing].

Interviewer: Were you aware of the organisation before that?

Interviewee: I was aware of the organisation but I hadn't interacted with the organisation before that. I knew they existed but I hadn't actually... That role was where it all started.

Interviewer: Do you want to tell me a bit more about the.... You said there was a lot of things you were doing and things grew arms and legs, but do you want to tell me a bit about the first projects and the first things you were involved with?

Interviewee: Oh, the first projects I was involved with?

Interviewer: Or any along the road that stand out to you?

Interviewee: I know there was a point where we were having to come up with new ideas and create new opportunities within the learning centre. So I provided, that's when I started doing my facilitating because it wasn't a job until then and then it was like right we need to fill something up in here. We did have opportunities there for the women but we wanted to provide further opportunities that might not be exactly what we were already offering then. So I was doing, I did a lot of things around, I did a course on the events management and I based a lot of that from the event that I had arranged at the refugee convention. It was about exploring all the different things you have to cover in there and we would have them arrange actual events and do all the actions you have to do to arrange the event and we would also, we provided the space for it so it allowed them to see it through from start to finish and it was good to see them build their confidence as they were doing all that sort of stuff as well. Oh there were other ones, it's all going to come to me as we go but yeah I remember everything at the end but yeah, it was all different things like that and then I also, I moved into delivering our Empowering Pathways Programme but that's as you move further on that by that point, that was when we were making the transition from Glasgow YWCA to YWCA Scotland that changed. We took the Empowering Pathways Programme which was something that we had at our end and incorporated that in and I delivered the empowering pathways programme on outreach. So I would go out to different organisations and deliver the programme and it was two groups of women and it was just all different things around women in power and different activities that they could do to build their own

confidence in being a woman and supporting other women round about them. So yeah it was that one and then after that I moved on to Y Equality, we started the Y Equality programme where we deliver sessions in primary schools. This is aimed at children in primary 6 and primary 7 and it was all about, it was all really confidence building, self-esteem, covering things around that. We would do five different sessions with them and they would be exploring leadership and things like that, as, just before they take the transition into high school where all these things are going to make a huge difference but yeah it was really about their confidence and things like that at that stage and I found it was really useful for the kids, the kids loved it, they loved doing the programme, I loved going as well, it was fun, I enjoyed it and then once we did, I did Y Equality and that for a while and then what happened? Oh yeah, I got health issues in 2022, is that right? Yeah, 2022 and I was off work for a while, and when I came back to work, I am in a position where I probably would struggle to go out and deliver like I had been going out delivering and thankfully I was able to move into a different job where this works better for me. So with me now being the business and finance coordinator, I'm doing a lot of background work, I'm over here now but I have all my knowledge and experience of all the things I've done with the organisation going through which can be useful as well but yeah it's been a huge transition for me and I got massive support from the organisation when I had my health issues and that in a nutshell I think brings us up to where we are now.

Interviewer: Do you have, of all those projects, do you have any of them that are your favourite, that you look back on most fondly?

Interviewee: I think I could probably say something about all of them but [pause] I think my soft spot is Y Equality, the school programme. I think the one that is the most for me is the Y Equality programme because we started that programme and it was me who went out and started that programme and took it out to the schools and then got more schools involved. It's just amazing to see, I dunno, confidence building in them at that age, just over a few sessions because you're hitting on the right subjects and they're taking a real interest in it too. So yeah I think Y Equality I probably have a soft spot for that but before I finish what I'm saying on that it then moves me on to the women's project when we did the Empowering Women because we would do that and we were going out and doing that in the community and the amount of women that you see them confidence building week to week and you can just see it in that person, they don't have to come and tell you that it made a difference for them because you can see it. It was amazing to see and I think each of them are just as important as each other in a way. I suppose yeah they're the ones that stand out for me the most but I'm not dismissing, the likes of the classes that we did in the learning centre and that's before those programmes started up, they're just as important but I think for that one, that one holds for me because I remember all these women would use it as a certain part of their week and it was part of their kids week coming into the creche and all the stories I could tell you about what goes on in the creche. We had one child who would come in with his mum and she came in a few times a week and he would come in with his mum, he was only a toddler and he would come and at that time I was on the reception desk and every day he would come in and he was a toddler, he was tiny and he'd come strolling over and he'd just come walking behind the reception desk and he'd sit up there with me and he'd be like right I'm answering the phone and he had to do his little be a receptionist for five minutes, five minutes before he started every day and I see pictures of him now and

he's such a tall boy because he's in his later teens now, he's proper growing up so it's just amazing because when we knew all those people then but you still see what they're doing now with some of them and to see some of those little babies have actually grown into adults it's fascinating and also terrifying [laughing].

Interviewer: Do you want to tell me a little bit more about the physical space, you mentioned the reception, I'm assuming the organisation has changed a little bit its physical location throughout the years, do you want to tell me a little bit about where you were based?

Interviewee: Yes, that was in Charing Cross, we were based on Newton Terrace and this was... We had classrooms over three levels in this building and the basement level was the creche area so that's where all the kids would go and all the other rooms were classrooms or offices because we had the staff working in there as well. It wasn't a massive learning centre, there were only so many rooms, we had one, two, three, so we had maybe four or five training rooms, one of them was a hall so it was big so we could do bigger events as well and that's where all the classes were held. I keep getting a flashback so I'm going to share this one now, with the creche being in place there was one day I was working away and my phone went and I answered it and it was a call from the creche and it was like Libby we have a health and safety issue can you come downstairs and I was like oh what's that, but I took health and safety seriously so I'll be there. So I hung up the phone and I went downstairs, the manager of the creche when I walked in she went come and have a look at this and I walked through and you look out the window and there was a rat on the stairs outside the window, that wasn't the problem. You had all the kids up at the window, 'Oh Ratatouille come in for your lunch'... She's like that's my problem [laughing]. So we managed to scare it away and that was the end of that but yeah they wanted it in. I just laughed all day that day, that was funny [laughing]. I know that's nothing like the question you just asked me but that's what I was thinking of so I wanted to share that one [laughing].

Interviewer: So the second part of the question is asking about what the neighbourhood was like, what the community was like and I feel like that speaks a lot to what it was like. Do you want to say anything more about how healthy the community was?

Interviewee: It was just such a wide variety of girls and women coming in to the building and it was just amazing to see the community that they had built. What I found fascinating was when we had a few women who were, a little older than everyone else, but they were the most fascinating because they had all the stories for everyone and they were probably the most supportive people to the younger ones, who maybe weren't as confident, that they would come in and be like right come and join me and I'm going to show you this. Some of them would come in and they were like everybody's auntie, that's what it felt like with them. They were the loveliest, loveliest people and they were so helpful for the younger women who were maybe not so confident in the activities and stuff that they were doing but they always got support. They all supported each other, they did in so many ways. It was lovely when we were up there but it's very different from that now because we don't have a learning centre, it's changed a bit but that all changed when we moved from Glasgow YWCA to YWCA Scotland, and well, we moved out of the learning centre shortly before that, moved into another location on Bath Street and we were there for a short time and it was

then that the organisation reached out to YWCA Scotland because there were financial issues at that point and we wanted to continue to provide the services that we could for girls and women... So yeah, we had to then move, we made contact with YWCA Scotland and arrangements were being made and during that time, I'm going to just be perfectly honest here, during that time with all the issues and everything that were going on, me being the person that I am and how my mind works, I resigned from Glasgow YWCA and I left, that was in 2014. After that happened, Glasgow YWCA then became part of YWCA Scotland and the next year in 2015, I came in as a Sessional Facilitator and it all progressed from there. I think that's why my journey has been so long. I am the longest serving member and I am also not the longest serving member because there's a gap in my role [laughing] but that's how that went. I'm sort of lost [laughing].

Interviewer: Yeah, you said you resigned. How were you feeling about the changes at the time when it was happening?

Interviewee: I think for me it was mainly more about what it means for the women who are using the service because when we realised that right okay, this creche thing can't continue and things were changing, it was quite sad to see that because all I could see was opportunities being taken away from women who are maybe, it's not the same as someone who doesn't have to look after the children and balance everything else, so it was quite sad to see that but that's how the funding world was looking like then, and we did everything that we could with what we had, which is all you can do really.

Interviewer: What did you do in the year when you resigned from the organisation? What did you do in that year? You said you came back as a Session Facilitator later, what did you do in that year?

Interviewee: Oh, before that happened? Well, it was funny right, I left the organisation and then at the same time, round about the same time, my brother had an incident while he was on holiday. He broke his neck and his spine, while he was in France, so he had an operation in France and then we got him home, so I looked after him for so many months to allow his wife to go and work, I was just trying to balance everything with the family for a while and then I did get a job where I was, it was working with a building company, it was just basically right, this is going on right now so I'm going to go work here and do this while this is going on and I did that for a bit and then only a few months after that I was speaking to the manager of the Glasgow Centre in YWCA Scotland and I was informed of the opportunity and I went for it and that was me back where I was supposed to be [laughing].

Interviewer: How did it feel returning?

Interviewee: Oh I was over the moon, I was so excited because I know that there was a lot of things that I didn't know so it was going to be a bit different but it was the same time and I knew some of the people because I had already been working with them. So yeah, I was really excited about returning and yeah settled right back in [laughing].

Interviewer: What were the first things...You came back as a Sessions Facilitator, what were the first things you did when you come back, if you remember?

Interviewee: I will remember, just give me a second. When I came back, I was right into it because it was a sessional facilitator role so it wasn't full time. It was so many hours a week that I would do but I was mainly doing like the Empowering Pathways Programme but I was quite happy doing that and I would be going out on trips to certain places with the women, and yeah, it was very, it was a lot of stuff going on, a huge variety. That went on for a while but again it was part time hours and then I'm trying to pinpoint the exact date but an opportunity came up for a full time facilitator position and because of where I was sitting and what I was doing it worked out perfect for me to fit in and do that and it got me back up to full time roles which made me so happy. Yeah that's it in a nutshell I think.

Interviewer: This might have changed a bit as well, as you say you've been with the organisation for a long time but what was on the agenda at the time when you started? What had been on the agenda for the organisation from your point of view?

Interviewee: What was on the agenda for the organisation... Are we talking about from the beginning of time or the beginning of our connection with YWCA Scotland?

Interviewer: Either way.

Interviewee: Well right, I'll do both of them. Glasgow YWCA to me was all about community, making connections, providing opportunities and allowing women to shape their own journey and learn and allowing even mothers to do that too, I think that was really important and then now at YWCA Scotland the learning opportunities are different, there are wider learning opportunities, there are bigger learning opportunities because the classes that we did back then, it's very different from the project that you're on but I think it's amazing to have all of these things because it ticks the box for everybody then and everyone has the opportunity. I think it's very important to have the bigger opportunities but the smaller classes which is maybe just confidence building is just as important for the individuals who are taking part in the programmes that we do. Hopefully that makes sense, I just blab.

Interviewer: [Laughing] No it does make sense, it does. You've already touched quite a lot on this but what has working for the movement looked to you on a regular basis, what does a day in the life of this look like for you?

Interviewee: A day in the life of working for the Young Women's Movement?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Although a day in the life for me now is very different to a day in the life... So I'm going to talk about both of them. A day in the life for me before, it was all getting in amongst everything, going out, going into schools, community centres and it was a huge variety of centres that we worked with as well. I worked with women in the rehab unit which was very different but it was so inspiring just to watch them make progress and the activities that we were doing and see the change and as time goes on it was fascinating to see but nowadays it's different because, because I do a lot of the background work, I'm working from home a lot of the time, sometimes I'll come into a shared office space in Glasgow and work with other team members. Sometimes I'll be through in Edinburgh at the

shared office space but I would say most of the things that I do I can do from home and most of the time that's what I do. It's just the way things are set up now because we don't have our own dedicated office space but there are shared office spaces that we can use if we need them. I tend to just do it from home, I get more done that way, it's weird. We're all different aren't we?

Interviewer: We are, we are. How's your involvement with the organisation interacting with your regular life, your place in work, has it affected the rest of your life in any way?

Interviewee: Has the organisation? I suppose it must. This is something my friend said to me years ago, she said, I can't remember what we were talking about, she just turned round and said, Libby you were born a feminist and I think I was, I'm just one of those people where I'm just like, no, no, not just because she's a girl, I'm one of them, I've always been one of them, but I suppose you become even more so when it's a part of your life, when it's a part of your everyday and you're working with those people. So even though I was born a feminist, I'm like, full on villain feminist now [laughing]. Or shall I say, super villain [laughing].

Interviewer: Do you want to expand on that a little?

Interviewee: I wouldn't say, I'm not a villain, but I will defend feminism in any setting and I'm all about ensuring that the girls and women I know have the opportunities that anyone else has and it should be just as easy for them as it is for any man walking down anywhere. So I think it's about encouraging other people that you know to be a full on feminist themselves because if they all come out feminist, what are they going to do? [laughing]. That's how I see it.

Interviewer: What were your relationships like with other members of the organisation? I suppose it's probably also changed throughout time, but do you want to speak on this one?

Interviewee: I have a list. There are several people that are in there. I still work with Ange and Heidi and I've worked with them, oh, almost as long as I've worked here because the three of us were all working together in the Children's Cross office when we had the learning centre over the creche. So that was Heidi and Ange who are still with the organisation. They were there too.

Interviewer: What were they doing?

Interviewee: They were, what exactly were they? It was project work for both of them. They were on different projects, but it was facilitation and delivery of programmes. I can't remember exactly what it was called, so I'm not going to say it [laughing]. My brain's not catching it just yet. I can't remember the name of the programme. So yeah, there's them. There's even, for example, one of the managers, the manager of the Glasgow Centre, Carol Cunningham, she's retired now, but I'm still in touch with her. She's my friend. There are other people who are still in touch in one way or another. There are other ones I see on Facebook and things like that. It's just where everyone's sitting in their life but yeah, every

relationship there is, they're all positive relationships and I think there's something to take away from everyone you meet here in the organisation.

Interviewer: Who else did you meet? Could you speak a little about going out into communities and schools? Who else did you meet through those types of opportunities with the women as well?

Interviewee: Sorry, could you repeat that last part?

Interviewer: Apologies. Who did you meet, who did not work at the movement, but who you met as part of your involvement and part of the work you did?

Interviewee: The first one that comes to my head is Nicola Sturgeon [laughing]. I don't think that's exactly what you asked me, but that's what's coming to my head. We had Nicola Sturgeon visit our offices when we were based on Sydney Street, which is just outside City Centre. That was all based around political things that were going on at the time. She came in and it was on TV. She spoke with our CEO and she also came in and met with our learners and sat down and chatted with them too, so yeah everyone was really excited about that day. That was a big day for us when we had Nicola Sturgeon in. A few years back now, she was the First Minister at the time, obviously she's not anymore but yeah, that was really exciting. Outside of that, who did we work with? There's all the primary schools that we worked with. It's primary schools in Glasgow that we worked with on that programme but other than that, when we were doing the Empowering Pathways programme, I mentioned the rehab unit, I had been out and did that. There were other community groups. I'm trying to remember the names of all of these. Sorry, this is one of those moments where my mind's just going, I'm giving you nothing. It'll come. We also had the other one... It's weird, I can see all the faces, I can see all the buildings. I'm just trying to put names on everything. There were so many. We had groups, there were many groups that we worked with, particularly in the east end of Glasgow. If I get any names, I will mention them. I'm really just trying to get my brain to pick something out here. I might have to actually come back to that question. It's not giving me anything right now, I'm sorry.

Interviewer: No worries, no worries at all. What was the team you were working with like? How was the working environment like as well? You spoke a little bit about, some of your colleagues are still at the movement, but how was it?

Interviewee: I suppose we are still pretty much the same with each other because we've known each other for that long, and like, Ange and Heidi, they're in the same team, so they work very closely with each other. They would have a lot more to say about that than I would because they sit there and I sit over here. I'll chat to you, but I know that their interactions are much more fun than mine are now but yeah, everyone gets on well, we all know that we can reach out to each other and support each other. As far as I'm aware, everyone's happy.

Interviewer: I think I'm going to take a wee break here because I need some water as well.

Interviewer: Do you want to speak a little again to what motivated you to join the organisation in the first place? What drew you to it?

Interviewee: At the time, for me, I was really interested, it was community work for me. I knew I wanted to be doing work in community and that one stood out to me because it was a lot of work with refugees, which was one of my passions again. So yeah, I remember just seeing the job, looking at the job description and I'm like, right, we're having this one and we went in and we got in [laughing].

Interviewer: What drew you to refugee work in particular?

Interviewee: Well, I think it's because I had spent a few years already doing community work and then I was drawn into the refugee work because I was made aware of the issues faced by people who come here to claim asylum and the obstacles they have to go through and I wanted to challenge that and explore it and it looked like the perfect opportunity for doing that for me. Sorry, my mind's taking me back and I never told that story exactly right, so sorry I messed up your video there. My journey with refugees started when I worked for an organisation previous years, so we're going around to early 2000s and it was a project, there was a position came up in this project and it was a refugee project but only half of the job was doing the refugee project, the other half of the job was admin and at the time I had the admin experience but I didn't have that so I went in and I managed to build it up through that and while I was in that role I arranged the first refugee convention and yeah, built everything from there and moved onwards and upwards.

Interviewer: I don't know if your perspectives on this have changed as well but what did working for the organisation mean to you when you started and what does it mean to you now?

Interviewee: Well I suppose when I started it was really just about community means everything to me, I know that's where I need to be, I don't know exactly what my job's going to be but that's where I'm gonna be. What does it mean to me now? Oh what does it mean to me now? Well I suppose you could say it's my life now because it's taken up a good chunk of it so far and doing that but I just believe in everything that the organisation stands for and it's all about providing the opportunities for girls and women to reach out and do the things that they want to do and it's amazing to see other people building new skills and their confidence growing with it, that's what does it for me. So yeah, that's that in a nutshell.

Interviewer: What are your hopes for the organisation, what have your hopes for the organisation been throughout the time you've been with it?

Interviewee: My hopes for the organisation, I suppose, well mainly the hopes for the organisation are that we are able to continue to offer opportunities and maybe even provide further opportunities than what we do already because I think it's also important that these opportunities are made available for people from every walk of life, so it might not be someone who has gone through university, it could be just opportunities for someone who is a single mother or hasn't had certain opportunities and want to explore it now, I just think it would be amazing to have something that had something for everyone and that I think would be amazing to see and it would be even more amazing to just be able to see another day where there is a learning centre with all these opportunities. With the

creche down at the basement and because that's, if you take away the creche all I think about is the opportunities taken away from all of these women who are just trying to balance everything in life and it would be amazing to have that for everyone. It's all about removing the barriers, which is different for everyone.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about your specific involvement in the movement currently and looking back on it?

Interviewee: Well I'm proud of the work I've done working with the Young Women's Movement. They've provided me with many opportunities and there's a lot of learning that I've taken from it. Sorry my mind's gone blank.

Interviewer: No worries.

Interviewee: I need you to tell me the question again.

Interviewer: Just how you feel about your involvement with the movement and have felt about your involvement throughout time.

Interviewee: Right, my involvement. Well I'm passionate about, you know what, I'm passionate about community, I'm passionate about feminism, I'm passionate about women, I'm passionate about providing the opportunities for everyone to do these things for themselves. Yeah, it's all about breaking down those barriers and just have them gone so that everyone can go on and do what they want to do with their life.

Interviewer: And you mentioned things that you've learned as well for yourself as being part of this organisation. Do you want to talk a little bit about that? What have you learned from your...

Interviewee: What have I learned from the organisation? Well I've really built on my facilitation skills as well and there's a lot of things I've learned from that. Also learned a lot about dealing with different types of people because doing a session in a learning centre and then going and doing a session in community or even going to the rehab unit, each experience is a very different experience and there's a lot that can be taken from that. I feel it has shaped me into a much more well-rounded person in that you can put me into pretty much any room and I can make something out of it. Or at least you've made me confident enough to believe that I can [laughing]. Which I think is the main thing. As long as you're willing to go in and give it a go, you're there. So yeah, I've gained a lot of skills and knowledge through working with the Young Women's Movement and I wouldn't change any of it.

Interviewer: Are there any skills that you feel like you've learned that you don't think you could have gotten from anywhere else?

Interviewee: Skills that I've got here that I wouldn't get anywhere else? I think it would bring me back to the facilitation skills because there are so many different scenarios you can get in and you need to treat every one of them different and because of all the ones I've gone out and done now and the different groups that I've found myself working with, I've

learned from each and every one of them because when you go in and you do a lot of these sessions, going out into the community, you're going in there and these women come to learn from you but we also learn from them. They bring knowledge in for us too and it's good to highlight and acknowledge that it goes both ways. So to highlight that to them as it goes is also a confidence builder. I think that's one of the practises that I kept at the forefront with everything I did. It was making sure everyone was given all the compliments that they needed maybe. Obviously not making things up but just highlighting the things that they're good at and things that they could maybe develop to improve on where they are at that time.

Interviewer: Are there any opportunities that you feel like you've gained from being part of the organisation as well?

Interviewee: Opportunities I have gained? There have been many opportunities. I know that while we were doing the project work, we were able to go through coaching and training with an external organisation which was designed specifically for facilitators and that was really useful for us in developing and shaping our roles as we were going forward and it was something that I found really useful. That just seems to be the first thing that has come to my head. There are many opportunities and to me the biggest opportunities are when you're out in the community and you're working with these people. Your opportunities are not the business part or sitting over there. Your opportunities are these women that are sitting here with you because every one of them has something that they bring to the table that we may not have. It might be just what the person sitting right next to them needs. It's all about building relationships and connections with each other to allow them to explore that which I find to be very important when it comes to working in community with each other.

Interviewer: I know I asked earlier about if you had any favourite projects that you have worked on, but do you have a favourite memory overall from your time at the organisation?

Interviewee: Favourite memory, well I've told you about Ratatouille. Ratatouille, that was a fun day. I suppose the biggest memories for me are just remembering all those characters that came into the door and made it what it was. They made it a community and they welcomed all the newcomers. We had many newcomers who had no confidence and didn't know how to look at some people, but you just have to pair them up with the right person helps build it a bit and then you know that's it right, your family too, you sit in your seat, who's next? Bring someone else in. It was just nice to know that these women felt that they had, it was almost like a family. They would all come in there and I remember there were others, particularly when it came to refugees. I remember one woman, there were many, but there was one woman I remember coming in and she was new to the centre and she had very limited English. She couldn't speak English very well, it was very limited and she came in and she's like, I need help, this is where I want to be, I want to be doing blah. And then I was like, right, tell me about you. Before we got into that conversation, this woman was a fully qualified lawyer in her own country and she's sitting here with what sounds like no opportunity and it was all because of a language barrier. So I was like, right, you're going to come and work with me, you're going to be answering my phone, you're going to welcome everyone who comes into the learning centre. You're going to practise your

English that way and yet, I'd seen her within two months, she was having full on conversations, I didn't have to sit with her anymore and I'd just built her English up and she got so confident where it was like, right, I can look at my opportunities now, I can... And especially when you realise there are so many women who came into that centre who had qualifications, big qualifications, but they did not matter because they were not from here. That broke my heart to see that because they're there sitting, they have this bit of paper, they've done that work, but that bit of paper for some reason means nothing here because it's in a different language but it was amazing to have the opportunities available for people to do things like build on their English and any other skills and it was amazing to see them grow and move on from that. I think that was the most rewarding part to date.

Interviewer: What do you think of your greatest achievement while you've been part of this organisation?

Interviewee: My greatest achievement? Oh jeezo, what's my greatest achievement? I can talk about everyone else when it comes to me. My greatest achievement? Well, I set out at the beginning of the Y Equality Programme in the primary schools and I built the relationships with the schools and delivered the programmes and then I pushed to include boys in the Y Equality Programme because it started as Y girls and it was only girls but the boys kept asking, when are we getting Y boys? They felt left out and so the programme became Y Equality, which included the boys as well and I think we needed that, needed that too because when you're talking about equality and things like that, it would be good to have everyone in the room. I think especially with that age group and in some schools with the issues that they could have coming up, the things that we covered there would address it to a certain extent anyway. I took a real joy in doing Y girls and then developing it into Y Equality to include boys because I think it's good to have everyone in the room.

Interviewer: How was that transition? What did you do to develop that further?

Interviewee: Well, a lot of it remained the same because we wanted to continue to talk about the same subjects with them. So we'd be talking about equality and leadership and their self-esteem. It was all different things like that. So we just adapted it slightly to ensure that it suited both boys and girls and let them do activities that would help them identify their differences and their issues and it allowed them to explore it a bit more and understand these things a bit better before they make the transition into high school.

Interviewer: And what do you think were the organisation's greatest achievements or any milestones that were reached during your time with it?

Interviewee: Milestones, well I've watched us taking on, I remember we had our first CEO under the age of 30. She's no longer with the organisation. So it's good to see what they did there. Although I would say at the same time I think there is still something to be taken from the older generation. It's more like maybe some knowledge and stuff would be useful for that. So I think I've totally changed where this question is going but this is where I am. I think one is as important as the other. I think the younger obviously take priority because that's the purpose of it. That's what we're here doing but being one of the ones who is one of the older generation, yeah I think there's something to be taken from us too and I've just

realised as I used to sit there and say yes I am the youngest one in the office. Not anymore [laughing].

Interviewer: How's that transition been for you?

Interviewee: From the youngest to one of the oldest? I was the youngest, now I'm the third oldest. I suppose sitting looking at it now it's really just where did my life go? What happened there? How did I get here? [laughing] Because it flies in, let me tell you, you get there before you know it. I've seen so many changes over the years in the organisations. I think what I find most fascinating is watching other members of the team but particularly the CEOs that we've had in place. Watching what each one does, the difference each one makes because everyone comes in with their own difference they do and they change something and they make this a bit better or that section a bit better and that changes that and then before you know it you've changed CEO and this person's come in and this person's done this and this person has changed that and it just continues. I find it fascinating watching what Jenny Snell does in her role and she's also got Emma in there with her too. Project team are the same, I'm not dismissing anyone in the project team, it's amazing to see the different things that they all bring to the table and the changes that they make in there too. I suppose it's the full collective altogether though because every member of that team is just another part of the operation. As long as all are functioning well it should go good.

Interviewer: Do you feel like the organisation has impacted your local community?

Interviewee: My local community, if I look at my local community. Not directly in my local community, no, not in my community, no, no, no, I'm not going anywhere with this.

Interviewer: How come?

Interviewee: Well I don't know, I just don't feel that they delivered, there wasn't any of that sort of work was brought into my community. Probably because a lot of the time as we've been going this work has been delivered in Glasgow. I don't live in Glasgow, I'm in South Lanarkshire. Now we may do things in South Lanarkshire, but not today. So that, would say no, so with regards to our organisation and my community, you've got me being the stubborn little feminist that I am [laughing] but yeah, we're tucked out the way, I would understand why it's more about the wider community and the more populated areas. A lot of the time you don't get a choice in where it is, it all comes down to how the funding works and things like that as well. So I don't feel like I've, yeah, that's really got on that, sorry.

Interviewer: No worries, no worries at all. Was there any, especially since you've been with the organisation for quite a while, political or social events that have happened during this time and that's also affected the movement?

Interviewee: Oh let me think, right. Well politically, well I did previously mention we had Nicola Sturgeon come and visit us and that was around the domestic abuse legislation that had been brought in then. So yeah, we do have things round about politics, that's because of the subjects that we cover I suppose and we recently celebrated our 100th birthday party, recently, that was 100 years from splitting from YWCA GB. Well it's a big journey,

we've got so many arms and legs when you think about it, so we did have that and that was actually here in this building, we had that here and it was really good to see that, we had invited 100 people to celebrate 100 years and we had so many younger girls come in and I think that was really important for the younger generation to make their mark on that day, which they did. There were a lot of events and different things going on in different rooms in here, it turned out a really good day and as far as I'm aware everyone enjoyed that there. Nothing else is coming to my mind right now, that's all my head has.

Interviewer: And were there, once again, throughout your time, were there other movements that the Young Women's Movement have been involved in or partnered with?

Interviewee: When I first started, well we're going back to 2009 here though, I remember when we first started we did some partnership work with YMCA, a lot of that, it was almost like a yearly thing that they did together but that no longer happens and it was nothing to do with relationship, it was just really more about how the organisations represent themselves because we were YWCA, that was all really about a Christian organisation and that's not what we are. It's really, we were moving away from, we just want to be for anyone and everyone, it doesn't matter your religion. It sort of changed things there, it didn't ruin a relationship, it just meant we weren't doing things quite like that. So, they would meet maybe once a year and it was sort of like prayer sessions and things like that and it was like right, we're not doing that anymore, here's what we are and that's where we noticed things were really starting to make a change because we wanted the organisation to represent everyone and we wanted that to be clear through the name of the organisation and that's why we ended up where we are now, that's why we are now the Young Women's Movement because we don't want anyone to look at the name of the organisation and think, oh they're Christians, when none of us are [laughing]. So yeah, it's about involvement for all.

Interviewer: Have you felt like you're part of a global movement?

Interviewee: Well I suppose we are, we're all part of the same thing, we're not in the same organisation, we do have connections with YWCA Europe, our senior leadership team do some work with them. So yeah, I suppose we do make our connections with other organisations when the opportunities arise and yeah, you know what, it's a fun world, we could go and help everybody in the world, you can't go that far, but if we could, we would.

Interviewer: And how do you, you were touching on it a bit already with the name change but how do you feel about how the movement has evolved throughout your time with it?

Interviewee: I find it fascinating, I think it's amazing to see how it's changing, and there are opportunities I see now that I didn't see before, which is amazing, and I just hope that we can build on even more opportunities there. I suppose I agree with everything so far, I like that we've moved away from the religious aspect, just to make it all the more inclusive for everyone. I love all the opportunities that there are, and there are more opportunities here now, but again, it brings me back to what I said before about opportunities for all, where in an ideal world we would have a creche over there for absolutely everyone, so that everyone can take part and do things that they aspire to do, regardless of how their life is shaped and

what's going on in it at the time. Yeah, but I believe that we are providing opportunities that do remove barriers, and I think it would be difficult to get back to that place where we have creche, free creche, available for our learners but I would still never stop talking about it, because I know how magical it is, I know how useful it can be for parents who are just trying to make a change and learn something new for themselves.

Interviewer: What would you like the future of the movement to be like, or to look like?

Interviewee: Oh wow, that's right, I've never thought about that. Why have I never thought about that? Why have I never thought about that? [laughing] What do I want the future of it to look like? The future to me is just broken barriers, break all those barriers, that's what this is, break every single one of those barriers, so that must, I'm sorry, that must include that creche I was talking about and just providing, make sure the opportunities are there for people from every walk of life, not just people who are maybe at university, someone who maybe just made it through high school, there's an opportunity there for them too, because we are all on different journeys, but we're all made of the same stuff, aren't we? So, yeah, in a nutshell, just break down those barriers.

Interviewer: Is there anything in particular you would like to see, or is it more just breaking down those barriers?

Interviewee: My mind keeps just going back to the childcare thing, I think I seem to, right now I've got this thing about I'm defending all the mothers here right now. I'm not even a mum, maybe that's what it is, I don't know. I suppose it's not just the mothers, because there will be other people who maybe have confidence issues for whatever reason, and there are barriers that need to be broken down for those people too, so I suppose it's different for each individual. So I suppose it would be amazing if we could see even more opportunities available that we provide that appeals to a wider array of people, that would allow them to make choices that can make change for them. It's not about what changes for us, it's what changes for the people who use our services.

Interviewer: And what impact do you feel like you have achieved through the movement, either personally or on us, or just as being part of the movement, what impact?

Interviewee: What impact? I'll be honest, I do look at myself and I think you don't make any sort of impact, I probably do, and I just can't identify it. This would be a perfect moment where one of my workmates would tell me [laughing]. What impact have I had on the organisation? I can't put it specifically on anything, but I care. I'm very, very stubborn, and that gets things done and I'm passionate about the work that we do, I'm passionate about the young women's movement, and all the work that all of you do on all of the programmes that we have. Yeah, I'm passionate just about all of it. I'm a full-on feminist, I don't know what else to tell you.

Interviewer: That links into my next question which is do you feel like the organisation is a feminist organisation as well?

Interviewee: Oh yeah, if it wasn't a feminist organisation I would be telling them how they're not [laughing] but no, it is a full-on feminist organisation, and there are supporting girls and women in all the ways that they can with the services we offer at the moment.

Interviewer: What does feminism and being a feminist organisation mean to you?

Interviewee: I suppose it brings me back to what I said earlier, cause... I remember when I first realised I was a feminist and I identified as a feminist and I was like alright, so I spoke about it a bit and I was chatting to my friend about it one day and I said to her and she's the one that turned around and said, you were born a feminist and that was when I sat back and I looked at it, and I'm like, you know what, actually, I was born a feminist, I just didn't actually see it before because she sat and gave me all these examples of things that I did that didn't allow anyone to step over me, and she's like, that's what makes you a feminist and it was nice to hear, because I suppose I hadn't acknowledged it because I hadn't called myself a feminist before and I've been wearing that badge with pride ever since I worked that one out [laughing].

Interviewer: And then for the next question, because you talked a lot about changes that the organisation has gone through, do you feel like there's any challenges that you've faced?

Interviewee: Have I faced any challenges in this organisation? [Laughing] Oh yeah, right, here we go. There have been challenges, which mainly comes down to, I suppose this is the case with any other charity, challenges come along with funding challenges, because that's how these charities operate, it's all based on how that runs and that can bring these challenges to you. I faced it back in 2014 when Glasgow YWCA was having issues, and they had started having talks with YWCA Scotland, and at the time I went, right, you know what, they're struggling. So I resigned. Now, I did that mainly I think because it was about the organisation, it wasn't about me. I was like, right, well, okay, I'll do this for the organisation, so I resigned from my role, because I'm thinking, right, you don't need to pay me off or do whatever, I'm out the way, deal with what you have now and then that was when they transitioned to YWCA Scotland, and then I had other things to deal with, so I was distracted otherwise at the time anyway, but I have to say I am over the moon that I had an opportunity to come back in after that and continue doing this work with the organisation. It means everything, everything.

Interviewer: Okay, I think we'll take another break there.

Interviewer: [Missing Audio] ... With the movement, that you would like to tell us about?

Interviewee: Do you know what came into my head? It was so weird. I'm going to share it anyway. When we had the learning centre in Charing Cross, there was, you know, we've got Google Maps.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And it covers all the streets? Well, back then, I was on Google Maps, standing immediately outside our learning centre and it was weird because when the car went by and took the picture, I was either scratching my bottom, or I was pulling my knickers out. It was

one or the other because that's just all you could see was me doing that and that was the highlight in the office for a couple of months, that was. They'd be like, 'mon , we'll show you a little bit on Google Maps. Everybody would go to Google Maps and bring up the learning centre and they'd ask me. They've changed it now, thankfully but yeah, that was the highlight for a while. That was me promoting YWCA [laughing]. Directly outside the building. Couldn't have done that if I tried [laughing]. Wish I hadn't. I'm actually, I know that you can go back to the archive. I think I might actually go back and try and find the archive so that I could show you. If I do find it, I will pass it over at least to Rebecca and she can show it to you but with regards to any items or photos, I'm sorry, I never realised. So I didn't bring anything like that with me. I only have that photo memory that I just shared with you there. But I could always have a look and if I find anything that might be useful, I can share that over as well.

Interviewer: I was a little bit curious about, because now, as you said, you're kind of more behind the scenes in the work that you do. How do you feel about doing that work now?

Interviewee: Well, I'll be honest, it works out. It's ideal for me now because of my health and what a typical day it is for me these days, it's just much easier to do that than taking on the going here, there, everywhere delivering, doing that, might feel a bit heavy for me sometimes. Don't get me wrong, I'll still be able to do it because I'm still stubborn but this works out perfect for me. I miss the other stuff, don't get me wrong. I miss going out and delivering. I can hear them in there right now and I'm like, that would have been me and I would have been doing this. I miss that, but at the same time, I'm a realist, so I'm like, this is the way it is now. I enjoy doing what I'm doing and I really enjoy seeing the younger generation taking on the roles that we were doing at one point and watching them shape it into something new altogether. It's fascinating to watch them because I know every single one of them, those girls in that room, they've got so many skills and they bring something each as an individual. It's amazing just to watch them turn it into what it is.

Interviewer: I'm going to ask a question of you off camera but would you like to talk about the creche? Why do you think it would be difficult to bring that back?

Interviewee: With regards to the creche, it would be amazing to have a creche available for learners doing different classes, just to remove the barrier. It would be difficult though, I think, especially now because of the funding forefront. What the funding platform looks like these days, there are less funding opportunities and we have more organisations applying for the same funds and these funds are only going to go so far, which means only so many organisations will be able to secure that funding and with it being as split across the way as it is, I think it would be very difficult to provide all the opportunities that we want to with the current financial climate. I think it's about being involved and moving on and continuing with the aim of hopefully doing that one day. We might not get there, but I think it's worth exploring because I think it would be a great opportunity for so many people.

Interviewer: That's kind of the end of my questions here. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Interviewee: Anything else I would like to share that I haven't shared yet? It has been, aw do you know what, its been amazing, amazing. All the opportunities, all the individuals, it's the people that you meet really. The people that you meet, the things you see them doing, the progress that they make. Even the ones that come in and challenge it, everyone's got something in front of the table. I think I've sort of lost where my thoughts are going here. I'm just basically talking as it's coming into my head. Sorry, could you tell me that question again?

Interviewer: Just if you have anything about your time, anything at all that you would like to share, anything about the movement, you'd like to say, any other memories that are popping up or anything?

Interviewee: I think I've given you at least my main memories, although there are so, so many. I could tell you an awful lot of stories from over the years, which you would need a lot more tape if I was to sit and tell you all of them but putting it in a nutshell, working for the Young Women's Movement, which was YWCA, I'm so thankful for everybody that I worked with, learned from and I'm talking about learners, not just other employees here. It's everyone who is all part of everything that made it what it was, and what it is, and what it could potentially be in the future. It's just, yeah, fascinating and I'm excited to see where it all goes.

Interviewer: Thank you very, very much for sharing all of that, it's been lovely.