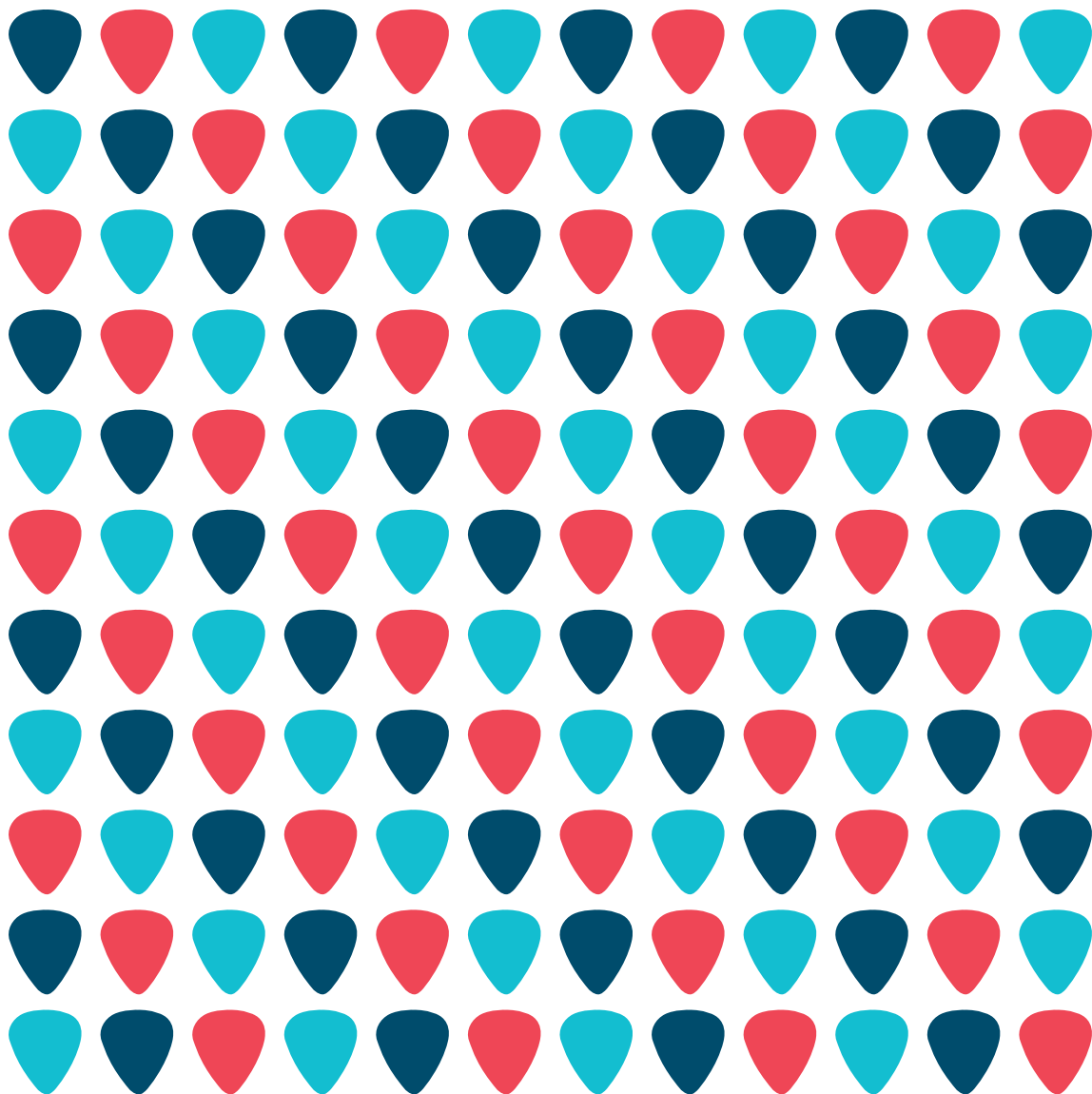




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**A Retrospective and  
2014/15 Evaluation of  
the Youth Music Initiative**

**Executive Summary**



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# Introduction

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This report sets out findings from an evaluation of the Scottish Government Youth Music Initiative (YMI) programme. The YMI is administered by Creative Scotland, and aims to put music at the heart of young people's lives and learning. It was set up in 2003 and has an annual budget of £10 million. More context on the YMI is provided in Chapter One of the full report.

In 2014, Creative Scotland appointed ODS Consulting to evaluate the YMI. The first stage of the work was a retrospective evaluation, looking back over the past 11 years of the YMI's operation. The second stage involved a detailed focus on the YMI during 2014/15. This report brings together high level findings from both stages. The full report and separate more detailed reports on both evaluations are available at: [creativescotland.com/ymi](http://creativescotland.com/ymi)

## Outcomes

This evaluation explored outcomes of the YMI, through 12 case studies involving discussion with young people and practitioners, survey responses from over 700 teachers and over 200 funded organisations, in depth interviews with over 30 funded organisations, and a review of reported outcomes through end of project forms submitted by funded projects.

From this, there is strong evidence from 2014/15 and over the previous 11 years that YMI activity is supporting the learning and development of young people, both within the field of music and beyond. More analysis of the outcomes achieved is provided in Chapter Two of the full report. The outcomes are explored in relation to Curriculum for Excellence and outcomes within the Scottish Government's Programme for Government for 2014/15.

### **Contributing to Curriculum for Excellence**

The YMI is contributing to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, helping to build successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. It is building music related skills, personal and social skills and successful learners, across the Curriculum. There is evidence that this initial experience of music is inspiring an ongoing interest, both in music and in learning.

### **Building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequalities**

The YMI is contributing to building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequalities. It is engaging those who wouldn't normally get involved in music – particularly young people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and young people with additional support needs. In 2014/15 we estimate that the YMI engaged over 150,000 young people in school based music making, and 76,000 in activity out of school.



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## **Creating more, better paid jobs in a stronger economy**

The YMI is creating and supporting new jobs, training and volunteering opportunities. In 2014/15 it created over 1,000 jobs, over 1,000 trainee or volunteering opportunities, and over 2,200 people benefited from training or continuing professional development. Qualitative evidence suggests that the YMI is supporting young people to become inspired, explore their options, increase their aspirations and consider careers and further education within music and beyond.

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## **Empowering communities**

The YMI is helping to bring communities together, of different ages, places and experiences. This is having a particularly positive impact in remote and rural communities and in places where young people face challenges due to neighbourhood youth territorialism, through bringing young people together from different areas.

The YMI has also supported the youth music sector more widely, through stimulating more interest in music making. It has contributed to raising awareness of music and culture, and provided a platform to promote and showcase youth music in Scotland. Some of the outcomes the YMI is contributing towards are very much intended and built in from the outset of projects. However, others are positive unintended consequences of the YMI funding – including impacts around community relations, perceptions of young people and community safety.

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## Activities

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### The YMI aims to put music at the heart of young people's lives and learning.

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It has two strands – activity within schools, and out of school activity. Most funding (£8 million) goes to school based activity, with £1.8 million going to out of school activity. In 2014/15 Creative Scotland operated three funds through the YMI. These were the Formula Fund (for school based activity) and Access to Music Making and Strengthening Youth Music (both for out of school activity).

In 2014/15, 32 local authorities and Jordanhill School received funding for school based activity.

School based activity mainly supported delivery of the Primary 6 (P6) target, that all young people should receive an offer of a year's free musical tuition by Primary 6. In 2014/15, 81 per cent of all school based projects contributed to the P6 target. Every local authority had at least one P6 target project which involved at least 12 hours of music making activity. The flexibility of the YMI funding allows local authorities to provide a diverse range of projects at local authority level, ranging from taster sessions to more intense learning, tuition and music making activity.

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In 2014/15, approximately a fifth of school based projects went beyond the P6 target to involve young people less likely to be involved in music making. The strongest focus was on young people from deprived areas and young people with additional support needs.

In addition, 71 projects were funded to undertake out of school activity. Creative Scotland also made seven funding awards to strengthen youth music in Scotland, through training, development and networking.

Out of school activity had a strong focus on tackling disadvantage and inequality. In 2014/15, over half of these projects targeted young people in areas of multiple deprivation, and young people with limited music making opportunities. A quarter targeted young people with additional support needs, and a similar proportion targeted those making music independently. Just four per cent of applications proactively target young people from ethnic minority communities.

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## Experience of delivering YMI activity

There was a high degree of positivity about YMI activity across the country.

Young people and school teachers were extremely positive about the success of the YMI, and the case studies demonstrated real successes at local level. Most young people and teachers indicated that they would change nothing at all about YMI activity. Those who did suggest improvements felt that activity should be more regular (say weekly rather than fortnightly), more varied (including singing and a range of instruments) and more complex, building up skills on an ongoing basis.

Key success factors included the flexible approach; the inclusive approach to involving all children; access to specialist tutors; the partnership working between organisations and the links with Curriculum for Excellence (particularly within school based music making activity).

Most had worked in partnership with others to plan and deliver their YMI funded activities. Many felt that partnership work was one of the most exciting aspects of their approach to delivering YMI funded activity, bringing about real benefits for young people and deliverers. Partnerships were particularly useful when providing tailored approaches for young people with additional support needs, or in specific musical cultures (such as Gaelic).

The main challenges for those delivering YMI activity related to practical challenges such as geography which required innovative solutions; links with schools which could take time to build; sustainability, particularly where programmes operate just for a few months of the year and where there is limited wider community music making to link young people into; and challenges interpreting the P6 target.

## Future monitoring

Overall, YMI funding recipients found it reasonably easy to complete the monitoring information required by Creative Scotland as part of the YMI administration process. However, there were questions about whether the information was useful. Some suggested that moving towards simple quantitative information supported by softer information about outcomes may be more meaningful.

As part of this evaluation we piloted new approaches to monitoring, focusing on outcomes. We learned that:

- There is support for an outcomes focused approach, which is simple and focuses on a small number of outcomes which are most closely linked to the work of most YMI projects.

- It is challenging for many to gather information on the profile of participants (in relation to additional support needs, ethnic origin and socio economic disadvantage). However, those who were targeting these groups specifically were largely able to provide a rough estimate of the numbers involved.

A proposed new monitoring system is included as Appendix Two of the full report. We tested this system as part of our survey of YMI funding recipients for this evaluation. This trial found that overall most respondents were able to provide a meaningful answer to each question within this system, or indicated that they would be able to in the future. A number indicated that a shift to this type of monitoring information appeared simpler and more useful than the previous system. However, it will be important to think about whether some organisations may struggle to provide the information due to the nature of their YMI funded activity.



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## Issues for consideration

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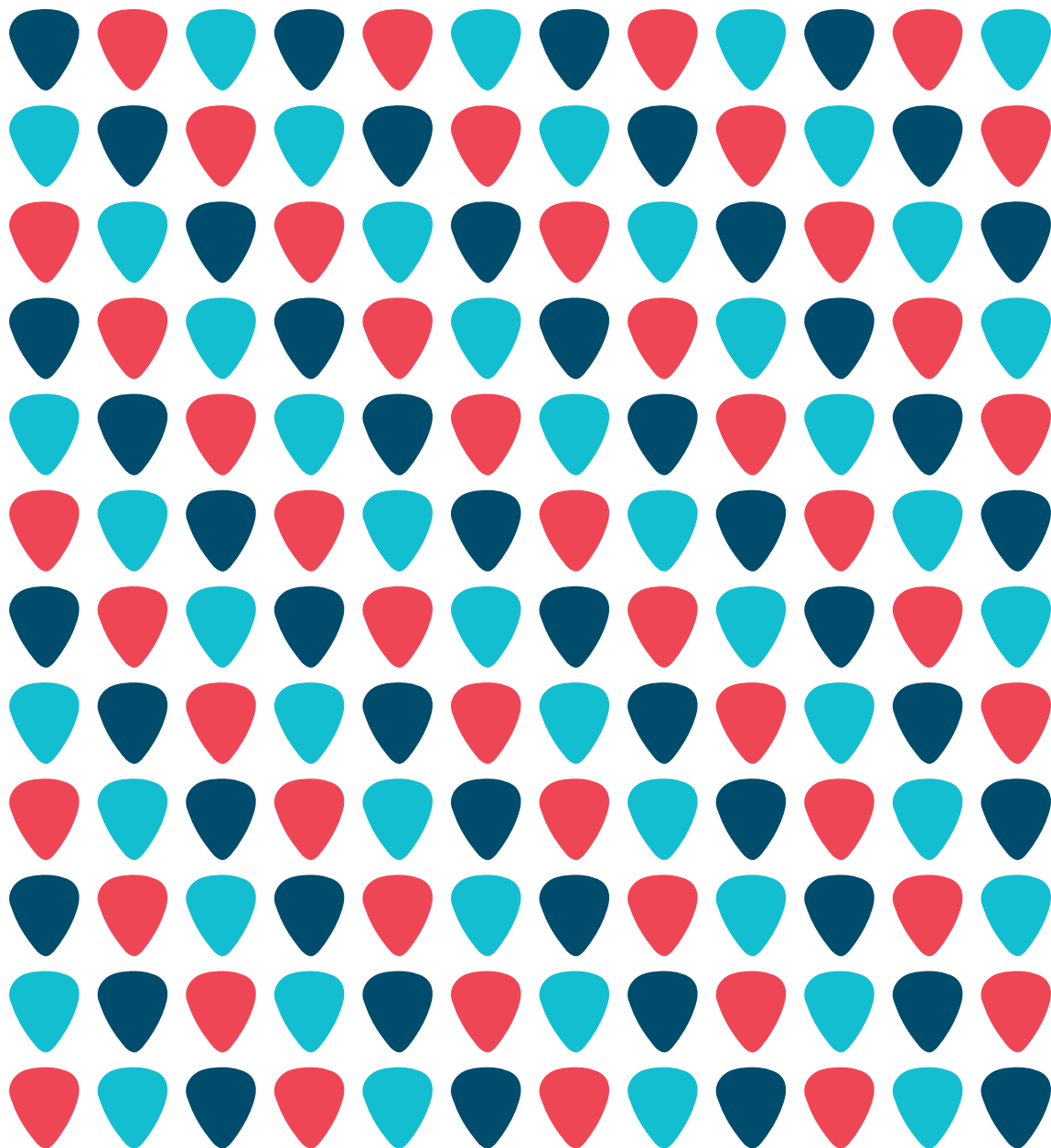
Chapter Six of the full report highlights a number of issues for consideration as a result of this evaluation. These focus on:

- ensuring that the positive outcomes achieved by the YMI can be evidenced in the future, and how organisations can receive the support they need to do so;
- encouraging diversity in the applications received, perhaps with more support for small community organisations;
- considering the balance between new and innovative projects, and successful existing projects – and the length of funding term offered to these; and
- considering whether YMI projects should be encouraged to think more about pathways and routes beyond the YMI.

“There is such great reward in witnessing shy individuals blossom into confident youngsters... their pride in what they have achieved in six short weeks can be humbling.”

“We find it quite tear jerking and parents also get emotional hearing the music that their children have composed and performed.”

“We’ve become more of a team, because when you play drums together you have to listen to each other. We’re working together more and we’re getting on with each other more.”



## Acknowledgements

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