



YouthBanks in Manchester, UK

Funded by the City council and delivered by Youth Workers in Greater Manchester

Manchester City Council oversees a network of four YouthBanks, hosted by partner organisations including Nurturing Foundations, Rushford Park, Youth On Solid Ground, and YPAC Manchester. The young grant-makers range from 12 to 25 years old. The hosting organisations encompass a variety of focuses, including sports, street youth work, and Black-led initiatives. This collective effort represents a diverse array of young individuals from across Manchester. Each YouthBank is led by a dedicated practitioner who is a staff member of the hosting organisation. Young people meet week in their own area. The network convenes monthly meetings to support the practitioners, share learning and collaborate. They have all successfully completed one YouthBank cycle and are currently progressing through their second cycle.



YouthBank in Liverpool, UK

YouthBank operates from Alder Hey Children's Hospital

Liverpool YouthBank, an extension of the Alder Hey Youth Forum, is a successful community engagement initiative. The forum engages young members in activities like YouthBank, leadership courses, and consultations. While membership isn't tied to hospital service use, many members have long-term illnesses, connecting with Alder Hey Children's Hospital Trust's healthcare mission.

Youth Workers from Alder Hey Children's Hospital Trust play a crucial role in YouthBank's success, offering guidance and integration within broader youth engagement initiatives.

Funded in partnership with the NSPCC, Liverpool YouthBank allocates £5,000, empowering young individuals aged 12–18 to decide fund allocations for various youth initiatives in Liverpool.

Beyond healthcare, the project includes leadership courses, consultations, and city-wide financial decision-making, aligning with the forum's goal of making a real difference in the community.



YouthBank in Minnesota, USA

YouthBank operates in local school, delivers on-the-ground skills training, collaborating with local organizations and donors.

Youth people aged 14 to 19 residing in the Northfield School District or attending a Northfield school actively participate in YouthBank. They give grants to youth-led projects, providing comprehensive training and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Empowered with the skills needed, young individuals make informed decisions, fostering tangible change for Northfield's youth.

Experienced Adult Advisors deliver on-the-ground skills training, collaborating with local organizations and donors. This ensures young participants have access to necessary guidance and resources, transforming their aspirations into reality. Over the past 8 years, YouthBank has contributed \$164,000 to projects envisioned and executed by the youth.

YouthBank upholds core values of equity for all and youth empowerment. It actively amplifies the voices of all youth, particularly those underrepresented, and staunchly opposes racism. This commitment extends to fighting against systemic biases and ensuring an inclusive environment for all.



YouthBanks in South Africa

YouthBanks in South Africa are expanding through the efforts of the Institute for Community Advancement (ICA)

In South Africa, YouthBank empowers young individuals aged 14–35 through fundraising and grantmaking initiatives, encouraging them to lead positive change in their communities. The Institute for Community Advancement (ICA) hosts and supports YouthBank projects along the West Coast while simultaneously providing essential training and support to organizations nationwide. Acting as both an implementer and infrastructure support, the ICA's collaboration with YouthBank International positions them to effectively build and sustain YouthBanks, fostering impactful community development across the region.

YouthBank's unique approach requires host organizations to provide matched funding, supporting the efforts of young people as they raise funds independently.

As an infrastructure support organization, the ICA envisions a national fund that would empower YouthBanks across the country to apply for funding. Additionally, the ICA explores potential exchange programs between YouthBanks, envisioning a regional YouthBank HUB through national gatherings of Coordinators and members.

To ensure commitment, potential host organizations are required to make financial contributions to the development and operations of the YouthBank project they host, reinforcing the sustainability and impact of this transformative initiative.



Case Study: YouthBank Khon Kaen, Thailand (2024–2025)

Delivered by Voice of Youth, Khon Kaen with support from VSO International, Bangkok

In 2024–2025, a group of 15–25-year-olds in Khon Kaen, Thailand, didn't just join a community project — they ran it. They trained, created the grant process, reviewed proposals, made funding decisions, and reflected on the outcomes.

Their theme: Youth Action on Climate Change, aligned with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

Khon Kaen, a city hit hard by record heatwaves and air pollution, became a testing ground for youth-led climate action — and for what happens when young people are trusted with real power and money.

HOW IT WORKED

Phase 1 – Learning by Doing:

YouthBank members joined workshops (in Thai and English) on community mapping, budgeting, and evaluation. They ran a trial round and even organized a local Saturday school under a railway bridge — learning by leading.

Phase 2 – Youth-Led Grantmaking:

They launched an open call for climate-focused projects, screened applications, interviewed teams, and awarded grants up to 10,000 THB (£225). All processes — from decisions to communications — were run by the YouthBank team.

Phase 3 – Reflection and Learning:

Funded teams reported on outcomes and joined a peer reflection event, discussing lessons and sharing stories online to inspire others.

IMPACT: REAL MONEY. REAL POWER. REAL LEARNING

The shift from participant to decision-maker was transformative. YouthBank members learned to balance fairness with friendship, idealism with budgets, and autonomy with accountability.

They didn't just learn about governance — they practiced it.

CASE STUDY - WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE DECIDE WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Five youth-led projects tackled local climate risks and advanced multiple SDGs:

- Kon Rim Rang: Mapped how floods and heat affect poor communities; shared findings with local leaders. (**SDG 13**, **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**)
- Green Kinship: Built raised gardens for food security and climate resilience. (**SDG 2 – Zero Hunger**, **SDG 13**)
- Gujajang: Taught families to recycle food waste using worms, reducing field burning. (**SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production**)
- Mai Wai Tae Pai Tor: Ran school campaigns on air pollution using recycled materials. (**SDG 4 – Quality Education**, **SDG 13**)
- We Bare Bears: Trained youth to use Instagram for digital climate advocacy. (**SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**, **SDG 13**)

WHY IT MATTERS

YouthBank Khon Kaen proved that agency > access.

When young people control the funds, they learn to govern, negotiate, and lead — not in theory, but in practice.

This was not youth “participation”; it was shared governance in action.

Money became more than a tool — it became a way to explore values, justice, and community priorities.

Key Lessons for Policymakers and Donors

- Trust youth with real budgets, not simulations.
- Invest in youth platforms, not just youth projects.
- Design for equity: translation, timing, and inclusion all shape who gets to lead.
- Local first: The best ideas start from lived experience, not imported templates.

CONCLUSION

YouthBank Khon Kaen turned funding into a form of civic education. By giving young people control over resources, it built democratic muscle — one decision, one budget, and one local project at a time.

Participation isn't the goal. Power is.

And when young people are trusted with it, they don't just engage — they lead.



Case Study: YouthBank Dhanusha, Nepal (2024–2025)

Delivered by Unnat Nepal, supported by VSO International

In Dhanusha, Nepal, young people took on two of the region's toughest social challenges: **child marriage** and **youth drug use**, and led the solutions themselves.

With YouthBank's model, they received microgrants, training, and full decision-making power, transforming them from participants into real civic actors.

WHAT YOUTHBANK MADE POSSIBLE

Youth defined the priorities!

Using the YouthBank participatory model, young people consulted peers, families, and local leaders. They set the agenda based on lived reality:

- Rising drug use among youth
- Persistent child marriage practices

Youth selected and funded the projects!

Through YouthBank's interview-based grantmaking process, nine youth teams were chosen without requiring formal proposals — removing barriers for first-time leaders.

Youth led the interventions!

With small grants and support, they delivered:

- 6 community dialogues on marriage laws and drug risks
- 4 street dramas reaching 3,000+ people
- 1 youth-produced documentary soon reaching an estimated 10,000 viewers
- School sessions, youth-police dialogues, and community storytelling

These activities used local language, local culture, and low-tech communication, making legal rights understandable and relevant.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

475 people directly engaged in structured events

3,000+ reached through public theatre

10,000 expected through digital documentary release

12+ government and civil society leaders involved — including police and ward officials

Direct contributions to **SDG 3, Good health and well-being; SDG 4, Quality education; SDG 5, Gender equality; SDG 10, Reduced inequalities; SDG 11, Sustainable cities and communities and SDG 16, Peace, justice and strong institutions.**

WHY IT WORKED

Because YouthBank gave young people ownership, not just a seat at the table. The model enabled:

- Youth-led priority setting
- Peer-led project selection
- Civic accountability (youth to youth, and youth to community)
- Bridging power gaps between young people, families, and institutions

Youth didn't just raise awareness; they changed norms, built trust, and brought laws to life through culturally rooted methods like Maithili street theatre and local radio.

Key Lessons for Funders & Policymakers

- Fund youth-led structures, not just youth-themed activities
- Trust young people to allocate resources — it improves equity
- Support local-language, low-tech communication for deeper reach
- Build youth-government collaboration through real shared platforms

CONCLUSION

With only £3,700, YouthBank Dhanusha turned microgrants into macro-impact — shifting social norms, strengthening legal literacy, and proving that when young people lead, communities listen.

YouthBank didn't just support projects.
It created young changemakers.