



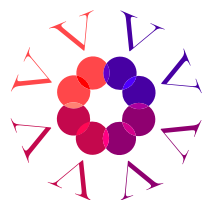
RJ Working
Restorative Approaches to Harm



**Funded by
UK Government**



Final Evaluation Report: RJ Working's 'Youth Led Climate Conversation Project'



Contents

Final Evaluation Report: RJ Working's 'Youth Led Climate Conversation Project'

Introduction	3	Measuring Engagement: What Do the Numbers Tell Us?	16
Project Overview	3	Key Takeaways from Engagement Data	17
Expected Outcomes	3	Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community	
Alignment with CLUP Funding Priorities	3	Engagement Events	17
The Independent Evaluation	5	Challenges and Lessons Learned	18
Purpose and Scope	5	Strategic Takeaways for Future Engagement	18
Evaluation Methodology	5	Conclusions on Community Engagement	19
Limitations of the Evaluation	6	Theory of Change	20
Future Considerations for Evaluation	7	Mechanisms for Change: How Young People	
Conclusion	7	Move from Interest to Leadership	20
Context and Objective Analysis	8	Activities: What the Programme Delivers	21
The Restorative Approach to Climate Action	8	Outcomes: What Young People Gain From	
Alignment with CLUP Objectives	9	the Programme	21
Project Progress	10	Impacts: Long Term Systemic Change	22
Early Challenges and Adjustments	10	Conclusions: How RJ Working is Creating	
Project Acceleration and Key Milestones	10	Lasting Change	23
Culminating Events and Transformational Impact	10	Project Outputs and Outcomes Against CLUP Criteria	24
Key Learning for the Organisation	10	Achievement of Project Specific Outputs & Timescales	
Lessons Learned	11	and Milestones	24
Community Engagement	13	Conclusions and Recommendations	27
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community		Appendices	29
Engagement Events	13		
Challenges and Lessons Learned from			
Public Engagement	14		
Evaluating the Impact of RJ Working's			
Youth Led Climate Conversations	16		

Introduction

Project Overview

The Youth Led Climate Conversation Project is a transformative initiative that empowers young people in Cornwall to become leaders in their communities by tackling climate issues through dialogue and action. At its core, the programme equips participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to facilitate meaningful climate related discussions within their communities.

These conversations serve to:

- Raise Climate Awareness: Educating communities about the urgent need to address climate challenges at both a local and global level.
- Foster Mutual Learning: Creating spaces for shared learning between generations, promoting a holistic understanding of the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of climate change.
- Drive Behavioural Change: Inspiring individuals and groups to adopt more sustainable practices and engage in collective action for climate resilience.

Piloted in Camborne, Pool, and Redruth, the project demonstrated its potential to engage diverse audiences and build momentum for climate action. Circle Leaders trained under the programme facilitated discussions that bridged generational gaps, promoted shared accountability, and inspired communities to take actionable steps toward sustainability.

Expected Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes of this project included:

- A measurable increase in climate literacy among young people and their communities.
- Strengthened youth leadership in climate conversations.
- Enhanced community resilience through local climate actions led by young people.
- Improved collaboration between schools, policymakers, and local organisations to integrate climate initiatives.

Alignment with CLUP Funding Priorities

This project directly aligns with CLUP funding priorities by:

- Supporting place based leadership by enabling young people to lead climate discussions.
- Encouraging community empowerment through climate literacy and intergenerational dialogue.
- Contributing to economic sustainability by promoting climate related career pathways.
- Strengthening social inclusion by involving underrepresented groups in climate conversations.



The Independent Evaluation

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of RJ Working's Youth Led Climate Conversation Project. Unlike structured climate education Programmes, which emphasise repeat attendance and curriculum based learning, this project was designed to equip young people with the confidence and skills to engage in climate conversations and inspire others to take action.

This evaluation, therefore, seeks to determine:

- Whether the project achieved its intended objectives of youth empowerment and climate conversation leadership.
- The extent to which first time engagement and subsequent action taking indicate deeper climate awareness and involvement.
- Key lessons learned that can inform future project development.
- How the project aligns with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Community Levelling Up Programme (CLUP).

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation applied a mixed method approach to assess the project's outcomes, using both qualitative and impact based engagement indicators, rather than attendance based metrics alone:

- **Qualitative Analysis:** A review of community engagement narratives, participant feedback, and stakeholder insights, with a specific focus on how participants felt more engaged, their expressed desire to act, and their role in leading further discussions.
- **Impact Based Engagement Analysis:** Given that repeat attendance is not an appropriate measure of success for this project, engagement was instead assessed based on:
 - First time participation as a critical indicator of outreach success.
 - Participant responses indicating increased confidence in discussing climate issues and a desire to engage in further action.
 - Evidence of participants leading conversations or influencing their communities, rather than just attending events.
- **Stakeholder and Staff Insights:** The evaluation engaged with project staff, educators, and community leaders from its inception in July 24, gathering first hand insights into challenges, adaptive strategies, and continuous improvements that enabled the project's successful delivery.

By prioritising qualitative impact and participant driven action over attendance figures, this evaluation methodology better aligns with the project's goals of youth empowerment in climate leadership.

Limitations of the Evaluation

While this evaluation provides valuable insights into the project's effectiveness, there are several key limitations to consider:

1. Repeat Attendance is not a strong indicator of engagement

The funder has stated that improved engagement is linked to repeat attendance. Unlike typical climate education programmes that require ongoing participation to complete a curriculum, this project was structured as standalone engagement events designed to give young people a voice in climate discussions. As such, repeat attendance is not a meaningful indicator of engagement. Instead, this evaluation focused on:

- First time attendees, as each new participant represents an expanded reach of the project.
- Evidence of increased confidence and leadership, where young people moved from being passive participants to active facilitators or climate advocates.
- Post event actions, as reported by participants, indicating that conversations led to tangible steps towards engagement in climate responses.

2. Limited Timeframe for Long Term Impact Assessment

The short term intensity of a seven month project restricted the ability to measure sustained youth leadership, community policy influence, and long term behavioural change. While early indicators suggest positive momentum, follow up evaluations

would be required to track long term impacts on youth led climate action.

3. School Term Constraints Impacting Delivery

Since the project sought to engage young people through their school communities, it was unfortunate that its launch coincided with the summer holiday, delaying engagement until schools resumed. This affected the ability to track the progression of student involvement over time, meaning engagement data is based on individual event interactions rather than sustained participation.

4. Variability in Public Engagement Across Different Events

Due to the diverse event settings, participation levels varied, with some events attracting large audiences (over 50 participants) while others had lower turnout. Unlike structured programmes with standardised attendance expectations, this variability was expected and dependent on external factors such as location, format, and competing activities.

5. Self Reported Data and Potential Response Bias

Much of the evaluation relies on self reported participant feedback, which provides valuable qualitative insights but introduces the risk of response bias. Some participants may overstate their engagement due to social desirability. Future evaluations could triangulate this data with independent observations or follow up assessments.

6. Evolution of the Project Design

The project adopted a flexible, iterative approach, responding dynamically to challenges such as the departure of the initial Project Coordinator and shifts in engagement strategy. While this adaptability enhanced overall impact, it also meant that some aspects evolved beyond the original design, making it challenging to apply pre determined evaluation criteria uniformly.

7. Lack of Direct Comparisons to Other Climate Engagement Models

Given the unique, youth led, conversation driven approach of this project, there was no direct comparison group for benchmarking outcomes. Future evaluations could incorporate comparative case studies to assess the project's effectiveness relative to other climate engagement initiatives.

Future Considerations for Evaluation

To enhance future evaluations, RJ Working should consider:

- **Longitudinal Tracking:** Extending post project data collection to measure sustained youth leadership and continued climate action.
- **Expanded Engagement Metrics:** Incorporating additional indicators beyond participation numbers, such as evidence of youth led climate initiatives emerging from the project.
- **Independent Observation:** Engaging external evaluators or partners to validate self reported engagement levels and track behavioural change over time.
- **Comparative Case Studies:** Conducting structured evaluations across multiple youth led climate initiatives to identify best practices and scalability potential.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, the evaluation provides a robust analysis of the project's achievements. The Youth Led Climate Conversation Project successfully empowered young people to engage in climate conversations, demonstrated clear evidence of participant driven climate advocacy, and created new opportunities for youth leadership in climate action. By focusing on first time participation, leadership development, and action oriented engagement, rather than traditional attendance metrics, this evaluation ensures that the project's unique success factors are properly understood and can inform future initiatives.

Context and Objective Analysis

The Youth Led Climate Conversation Project was developed against the backdrop of increasing public debate and polarisation around climate action. Media coverage frequently presents two opposing extremes: on one side, climate activists using disruptive protests to highlight corporate exploitation of the world's resources; on the other, frustrated individuals who feel alienated or inconvenienced by these protests, sometimes responding with hostility. This binary framing, however, fails to capture the complexity of public opinion on climate change. The reality is far more nuanced, with a broad spectrum of perspectives existing between these extremes.

RJ Working recognised the need to create a space where competing views and differences of opinion could be explored safely, rather than fuelled by antagonism or entrenched division. Restorative practice, central to RJ Working's methodology, offers an alternative approach—one that prioritises dialogue, mutual understanding, and collective problem solving over confrontation. This project aimed to bring together diverse perspectives, ensuring that climate discussions were not dominated by the loudest voices but instead facilitated through inclusive, respectful, and informed conversations.

The Restorative Approach to Climate Action

Restorative Practice for young people means having better relationships and the skills to look after themselves and each other. This creates a foundation for building fairer communities and tackling inequalities. Recognising and valuing their strengths, young people are supported to cascade their learning to others, achieving a ripple effect for tackling and preventing harm in their communities. RJ Working's climate position is unique in that it does not focus on individual behavioural adjustments in isolation, such as one million people only filling their kettle to the precise water level needed for a cup of tea. While such small actions may contribute to a broader cultural shift, they pale in comparison to the impact of community driven action. True change emerges when communities come together, moving beyond isolated efforts to address real world challenges posed by climate change in their daily lives.

To achieve this, the project focused on helping people see and understand the direct impact of climate change in their own communities, lives, and beyond. By fostering collective action, the project sought to cultivate active citizenship, which in turn generates pride in place and a stronger sense of belonging within communities.

A key component of this work was raising awareness of intergenerational climate injustice. The consequences of past environmental actions cannot be immediately reversed, and the effects of climate change will be disproportionately felt by today's younger generations, especially those under the age of 10, throughout their entire lives. In contrast, individuals over 50 will experience far fewer long-term consequences. This imbalance in impact highlights a fundamental injustice: those most affected by climate change have the least influence in current decision making processes.

This is where restorative practice becomes particularly effective. By working directly with young people, RJ Working empowered them to become leaders in their communities, using climate conversations to raise awareness among older generations challenge entrenched views, and inspire collective action. The project did not seek to create division between generations but instead fostered mutual understanding and shared responsibility. Young people were given the agency to influence local decision making, drive behaviour change, and mobilise their communities as a positive force for climate action.

Alignment with CLUP Objectives

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly CLUP emphasises connectivity, community, pride in place, and place based leadership. RJ Working's project directly aligns with these objectives in the following ways:

- **Connectivity:** The project facilitated meaningful connections between young people, schools, community organisations, and local leaders. By equipping young people with facilitation skills through restorative practice, it ensured that discussions around climate were inclusive and focused on positive responses rather than divisive.
- **Community:** The project strengthened community bonds by creating safe spaces for intergenerational dialogue. Rather than allowing climate debates to be dominated by extreme views or conflict, the project helped communities engage constructively, ensuring that all voices—including those of children and young people—were heard and valued.
- **Pride in Place:** By helping communities recognise how climate change affects their immediate surroundings and quality of life, the project instilled a stronger sense of ownership over local environmental challenges. Young people leading climate conversations encouraged collective responsibility and active participation in sustainability initiatives, reinforcing pride in local identity.
- **Place Based Leadership:** The project empowered young people to take on leadership roles within their communities, not only by participating in climate discussions but by shaping local action. Through training as Circle Keepers and leading

community climate conversations, young people emerged as facilitators of change, influencing decision makers and advocating for practical, place based solutions to climate challenges.

By embedding restorative practice within climate discourse, RJ Working has successfully bridged generational divides, fostered collective action, and strengthened Cornwall's climate resilience efforts, all while reinforcing the CLUP objectives of connectivity, community cohesion, pride in place, and place based leadership.



Project Progress

The project faced some initial challenges but successfully adapted to ensure its objectives were met.

Early Challenges and Adjustments:

- **Timing of Project Launch:** After the early recruitment of the Project Coordinator, significant time was spent on planning. However, as the project began at the end of the academic term, engagement with young people was delayed until late September. RJ Working relies on strong relationships with local primary and secondary schools, and their availability during term time was a key factor in scheduling activities.
- **Staffing Disruptions:** The unexpected departure of the Project Coordinator required senior leadership intervention to refocus the project. This, while initially a setback, turned into an opportunity, as an intern was promoted internally to the Project Coordinator role, ensuring continuity and internal knowledge transfer.
- **Funders' Concerns:** These early delays coincided with the first funding claim, and conversations with funders indicated concerns about progress towards targets. This provided a turning point for RJ Working to reassess its delivery strategy and accelerate activities.

Project Acceleration and Key Milestones:

From October onwards, the project regained momentum:

- Regular weekly events were introduced in community spaces, ensuring sustained engagement with young people and wider stakeholders.
- Young people were trained as Circle Keepers, strengthening local leadership and advocacy.
- Improved recording and reporting mechanisms were put in place, allowing for better tracking of targets and clearer evidence of progress.
- Engagement diversified, reaching multiple schools and community groups to expand participation and reinforce the project's impact.

Culminating Events and Transformational Impact:

Two large scale events in January each had more than 50 participants from diverse backgrounds.

These events:

- Gathered diverse opinions on climate action.
- Empowered young people to lead and drive community conversations.
- Strengthened collective decision making and community led action.

Key Learning for the Organisation:

- **Adaptability is critical:** The ability to pivot and respond to challenges was instrumental in regaining project momentum and ensuring high quality delivery.
- **Restorative practice is a powerful engagement tool:** The approach used in this project fostered inclusion and trust, helping young people develop confidence in leadership and discussion settings.
- **Effective partnerships amplify impact:** Schools, community organisations, and town and parish councils played an essential role in reinforcing engagement and sustaining project outcomes.
- **Project management in a local government funded environment differs from traditional charity funding:** Unlike many charity grants, which provide funding upfront with end stage reporting, CLUP funding required continuous planning, execution, and evidence submission. This learning process has strengthened RJ Working's ability to engage with structured local government grants in the future.
- **The value of tracking and evidencing progress:** Developing stronger reporting mechanisms has enhanced the organisation's ability to measure and articulate impact, positioning RJ Working for future funding opportunities.

Despite initial setbacks, the Youth led Climate Conversation Project evolved into a prime example of how a restoratively led, community participation project can drive meaningful engagement and change.

Lessons Learned:

Throughout the Youth Led Climate Conversation Project, RJ Working has gathered critical insights that will shape future initiatives, ensuring that community engagement remains impactful, sustainable, and inclusive.

1. The Importance of Local Partnerships

- Schools, local councils, and community organisations played a vital role in amplifying the project's reach.
- Strengthening partnerships with biodiversity groups, policy makers, and social justice organisations will enhance the long term sustainability of climate conversations.
- Engaging trusted community leaders ensured wider participation and reduced barriers to access.

2. Adaptability in Engagement Methods

- Initial delays in engagement (due to term timing) reinforced the importance of timing project launches in alignment with school schedules.
- Adapting formats to include both small scale community gatherings and larger public events increased accessibility and engagement.
- A mix of in person and digital engagement widened participation, allowing young people from different locations to be involved.

3. The Power of Restorative Practice in Climate Dialogue

- Restorative approaches were effective in creating inclusive, trust based discussions, ensuring that all voices were heard.
- Circle Keepers gained facilitation skills that not only supported climate conversations but also enhanced their leadership capacities in other areas.
- Active listening and shared accountability fostered a deeper sense of commitment to climate action.

4. Organisational Learning and Capacity Building

- This was RJ Working's first experience managing a local government grant (CLUP funding), which introduced new levels of scrutiny and structured reporting.
- Unlike traditional charity grants, CLUP funding required continuous tracking of activities and evidence based reporting, strengthening RJ Working's ability to handle similar grants in the future.
- Investment in monitoring and evaluation systems improved the organisation's ability to measure and articulate its impact effectively.

5. Overcoming Challenges to Project Delivery

- The departure of the initial Project Coordinator required a rapid organisational response, leading to an internal promotion that ultimately strengthened delivery.
- The senior leadership team took a more active role in hands on project management, ensuring that activities stayed on track and met funder expectations.

- Establishing clearer contingency plans for staff transitions will ensure smoother operations in future projects.

6. The Role of Young People in Driving Systemic Change

- Many participants were unaware of existing local climate policies, highlighting a need for more accessible, youth friendly information.
- Schools lacked basic sustainability measures such as recycling, creating an opportunity for RJ Working to advocate for Climate Action Plans in schools.
- Young people expressed a desire for direct involvement in policy making, suggesting the need for youth representation in decision making bodies.

By reflecting on these lessons, RJ Working is now better positioned to scale the project, strengthen organisational resilience, and advocate for systemic changes that embed youth led climate action into Cornwall's long term sustainability agenda.



Community Engagement

RJ Working's Consulting Communities through Youth led Climate Awareness initiative aimed to build trust, deepen climate understanding, and empower young people as facilitators of community led sustainability efforts. The approach was multi layered, using restorative practice to create spaces where diverse community members could explore climate concerns without confrontation. Engagement events were central to this effort, serving as both platforms for discussion and tools for increasing awareness among different age groups and backgrounds.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community Engagement Events

Rather than viewing engagement solely in terms of numbers, the project assessed how each event contributed to key objectives, particularly in terms of inspiring action, deepening dialogue, and creating youth led momentum for change.

Building Climate Awareness and Wellbeing

Events such as the Redruth and Camborne Summer of Wellbeing Festivals helped integrate climate concerns into broader wellbeing discussions, demonstrating that environmental issues are not separate from mental and social health but deeply connected. These events provided an opportunity to introduce climate action within the context of individual and community resilience, showing how issues like pollution, extreme weather, and resource scarcity directly impact daily life. Engagement levels at these events suggested that linking climate discussions to real life community concerns was an effective method of increasing awareness and interest.

Attendees at these events responded positively to the idea that taking local action on climate resilience could also improve overall community wellbeing. By framing climate action as a practical, everyday consideration, rather than an abstract or purely

scientific concept, the project successfully engaged individuals who may not have otherwise considered themselves active participants in climate conversations.

School Based Engagement as a Pathway to Action

The CSIA Fall Fete and Redruth School Aspiration Fair were among the most impactful engagement opportunities, demonstrating the strong appetite among young people for climate related discussions. These school based events allowed RJ Working to engage students in conversations about sustainability and career pathways in environmental sectors. The Redruth School Aspiration Fair proved to be one of the highest engagement events, with over 120 students participating throughout the day.

A key takeaway from these events was that students are eager for tangible ways to integrate climate action into their daily lives and future aspirations. Many young attendees expressed interest in youth led climate projects, school based sustainability initiatives, and environmental career pathways. Importantly, these engagements underscored the need for ongoing school partnerships, as students indicated that they had limited opportunities to

explore climate related careers or to develop leadership skills in this area. The success of these events suggests that formalising school based climate programmes, such as student led environmental councils, would be a valuable next step.

Embedding Climate Conversations in Cultural Spaces

RJ Working's presence at community events such as The Buttermarket Opening and Redruth Community Centre Christmas Fair highlighted the importance of integrating climate discussions into everyday social and cultural activities. Unlike school based events, which were led by young participants with a pre existing interest in climate action, these community gatherings introduced climate discussions in settings where attendees had not necessarily anticipated engaging with environmental topics.

By embedding climate action within culturally significant spaces, such as historic landmarks or seasonal celebrations, the project was able to reach individuals who might not otherwise have attended a dedicated climate event. Conversations at The Buttermarket Opening, for example, explored Cornwall's heritage and mining legacy, drawing connections between historical environmental impacts and contemporary sustainability challenges. Similarly, the Christmas Fair provided a natural entry point for discussions about sustainable holiday practices, such as reducing waste and supporting local businesses.

While engagement with the climate agenda at these events was smaller compared to school fairs, these events demonstrated the effectiveness of placing climate conversations in accessible, familiar settings. Attendees who may have been sceptical or disengaged from climate discussions in more formal settings were more willing to participate when these conversations were integrated into broader community events.

Challenges and Lessons Learned from Public Engagement

While many engagement events were successful in sparking conversations and encouraging participation, some challenges emerged. Climate action remains a polarising topic for certain community members, and while some interactions were deeply meaningful, others highlighted reluctance or resistance to engaging in climate discussions.

- Public spaces posed challenges in controlling the tone and direction of conversations, as some individuals arrived with strong preconceived opinions, making it difficult to establish a neutral starting point for discussion.
- In some instances, individuals dismissed climate issues outright or expressed hostility towards youth led climate advocacy. These moments reinforced the importance of restorative practice principles in de escalating tensions and creating safe spaces for dialogue.

- Events in rural and underrepresented communities had lower engagement levels, indicating a need for targeted outreach strategies to ensure that climate conversations reach all demographics.

These challenges provided valuable learning opportunities, highlighting the importance of skilled facilitation and the need to tailor engagement strategies to different audiences. Going forward, strategic messaging and more structured engagement formats—such as facilitated discussion circles—may help overcome these challenges and encourage broader participation.



Evaluating the Impact of RJ Working's Youth Led Climate Conversations

The Evaluation looks at evidencing how the project achieved the following, through feedback data collected at the events.

- Provide a platform for young people to lead and facilitate climate conversations.
- Embed climate action within community and cultural spaces, ensuring that discussions were relevant and accessible.
- Measure engagement beyond attendance, looking at how people felt more engaged and how they intended to take climate action forward.

This section evaluates the effectiveness of engagement events by analysing qualitative and quantitative data, reflecting on strategic learnings, and assessing project impact against CLUP funded targets.

Measuring Engagement: What Do the Numbers Tell Us?

RJ Working assessed how each event contributed to key project objectives, particularly in inspiring action, deepening dialogue, and fostering youth leadership in climate conversations.



Analysis of Climate Awareness Engagement

73%

Felt more engaged in **Community Conversations**

(TOTAL ATTENDEES: 405)

72%

Felt more engaged in **Primary School Conversations**

(TOTAL ATTENDEES: 158)

97%

Felt more engaged in **Circle Keeper Training**

(TOTAL ATTENDEES: 65)

75%

Overall felt more engaged

(TOTAL ATTENDEES: 628)

Key Takeaways from Engagement Data

1. Circle Keeper Training had the highest success rate (97%), demonstrating that peer led facilitation and leadership training are the most effective ways to increase sustained engagement.

2. Community Conversations (73%) performed well, validating the idea that dialogue based engagement is a strong tool for climate awareness.

3. Primary School Community Conversations had the lowest engagement rate (72%), Primary School Community Conversations engagement rate is aligned with the Community Conversations, which further validates the power of dialogue based engagement as a strong tool for raise climate awareness and improving engagement across generations, within a community.

These findings align with youth leadership and engagement theories, where people are more engaged when they take ownership of discussions (as seen in the success of Circle Keepers). They also reinforce that engagement should not be judged purely by repeat participation but by first time involvement and the motivation to act.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Community Engagement Events

Building Climate Awareness and Wellbeing

Events such as the Redruth and Camborne Summer of Wellbeing Festivals successfully linked climate action to broader community wellbeing. These discussions emphasised that climate resilience is not just about scientific concepts but about real life community concerns, including:

- The impact of pollution on physical and mental health.
- The importance of local food security and sustainable consumption.
- The interconnectedness between environmental sustainability and community resilience.

The high engagement levels (73%) at community events and (72%) at school communities suggest that framing climate conversations within tangible, everyday concerns is an effective way to increase participation among diverse audiences.

School Based Engagement as a Pathway to Action

The CSIA Fall Fete and Redruth School Aspiration Fair provided key insights into how young people want to engage with climate issues. These events demonstrated that students are eager for:

- Practical, hands on sustainability initiatives (e.g., school environmental councils).
- Career pathways in climate and environmental sectors.
- More structured climate leadership opportunities within schools.

With over 120 students actively participating, these school based conversations validated the need for more formal climate engagement structures within educational settings.

Circle Keeper Training: The Most Impactful Engagement Method

RJ Working's Circle Keeper model, which trained young people to facilitate and lead climate conversations, was the most effective engagement method, with 97% of participants reporting increased climate awareness. This success reflects:

- The power of youth led initiatives—young people engage more when they feel ownership.
- The importance of leadership training—participants in facilitator roles became more confident and informed about climate issues, and empowered to lead change.
- The potential for long term impact—many Circle Keepers expressed interest in continuing climate engagement beyond the project's timeframe.

This aligns with CLUP funded objectives of sustaining youth engagement in climate leadership. Expanding this model could have far reaching impacts in strengthening climate advocacy among young people.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

1. The Limitations of Traditional Engagement Metrics

- Unlike structured climate education courses (which require continued participation for learning), RJ Working's model was about one time, high quality engagement moments that sparked new voices in climate dialogue.
- The Circle Keeper approach proved that leadership roles drive deeper engagement than passive attendance.

2. Overcoming Resistance to Climate Conversations

- Climate action remains a polarising topic, with some participants dismissing or resisting engagement.
- Restorative practice principles helped navigate these challenges by creating safe spaces for dialogue rather than confrontation.
- Embedding climate discussions in cultural events (e.g., Redruth Christmas Fair) allowed conversations to reach new audiences who may not have attended a standalone climate event.
- Restorative practice brings people together to build resilience, through providing the space/opportunity to think about what action people can take.
- Restorative practice brings together people who may not usually meet, people with diverse experiences and identities.

Strategic Takeaways for Future Engagement

Lesson	Recommendation
Peer Led Models Work	The Circle Keeper model was the most effective engagement strategy. Scaling this leadership approach could enhance long term climate advocacy.
Embedding Climate in Cultural & Community Events Works	Climate engagement was higher when integrated into familiar spaces rather than standalone events. Future initiatives should continue embedding climate discussions in social and cultural activities.
School Based Engagement Should Be More Structured	While schools were key spaces for engagement, younger students need more structured, interactive methods for climate learning. A next step could be developing formal climate leadership programmes within schools.
Rural & Underrepresented Communities Need More Targeted Outreach	Expanding climate conversations into socioeconomically diverse areas will ensure a more inclusive climate dialogue.

Conclusions on Community Engagement

Through participation in a variety of community based events, RJ Working successfully engaged a broad audience in climate resilience discussions. The project's youth led approach empowered young people to take leadership roles in educating and mobilising their communities, while the integration of climate discussions into familiar cultural spaces helped break down barriers to participation.

While some engagement challenges were encountered, the overall success of these events reinforces the effectiveness of restorative practice as a tool for climate dialogue. The insights gained will be used to shape future outreach strategies, ensuring that young people remain at the forefront of climate conversations and continue to play a pivotal role in shaping Cornwall's climate future.

Theory of Change

RJ Working's Youth Led Climate Action Programme follows a structured Theory of Change (ToC), guiding young people through a journey from curiosity and early engagement to deep participation and climate leadership.

This programme does not simply educate young people about climate change, it empowers them to become facilitators of conversations, community advocates, and leaders of tangible action. Using Restorative Practice, RJ Working ensures that young people feel heard, valued, and equipped to shape the future.

Mechanisms for Change: How Young People Move from Interest to Leadership

RJ Working's ToC is built around a four stage process that guides young people from initial interest to sustained leadership. Each stage represents a key shift in knowledge, confidence, and action, ensuring that climate engagement translates into real world impact.

1. Curiosity & Emotional Connection

Young people start their journey feeling intrigued and inspired. The programme provides a safe space for emotional exploration, helping participants connect personally to the climate crisis. Through Restorative Practice, young people begin to express their feelings, navigate climate anxiety, and see their role in the bigger picture.

Evidence of this stage in action:

- 635 young people engaged through initial climate surveys, with 191 (30%) expressing a strong desire to continue climate discussions.
- Public campaigns (such as school assemblies and consultation events) created accessible entry points for discussion.
- Qualitative feedback from participants highlighted that young people felt “heard” and “valued” after attending events.

2. Participation & Confidence Building

As young people engage more deeply, they develop the confidence to speak, share, and collaborate. This stage is about moving beyond passive learning, young people begin to form opinions, challenge misinformation, and contribute to climate conversations.

Evidence of this stage in action:

- Restorative circles enabled deep discussion; young people actively explored solutions to local climate issues rather than just learning about problems.
- 296 out of 405 (73%) of Community Conversation participants reported feeling more engaged with climate issues after attending.
- New peer networks emerged, participants formed friendships and expressed a sense of belonging in the climate movement.

3. Leadership & Ownership

At this stage, young people step into leadership roles, taking charge of climate conversations, organising events, and driving peer engagement. This transition happens when participants feel empowered to take initiative and supported to act.

Evidence of this stage in action:

- Circle Keeper Training produced 65 young facilitators, with 97% reporting they felt more engaged and confident in leading discussions.
- Young people led climate consultation events in their communities, actively shaping local climate discussions.
- Twelve youth led initiatives were launched, including waste reduction campaigns, school sustainability projects, and community food gardens.

4. Systemic Engagement & Advocacy

In the final stage, young people move beyond individual action and begin shaping broader systems—from influencing school policies to engaging with local decision makers. Their voices become part of long term sustainability planning.

Evidence of this stage in action:

- Young people presented their ideas to school leadership teams, influencing discussions on sustainability in schools.
- Schools began to explore new climate action policies, based on student led recommendations.
- Youth voices were represented in local forums, ensuring young people had a seat at the table in environmental decision making.

Activities: What the Programme Delivers

RJ Working offers a diverse activity range tailored to different contexts, age groups, and levels of engagement.

1. Activities for Broad Public Engagement

- Climate Action Surveys – Gathering insights into youth climate attitudes.
- Climate Consultation Events – Giving young people a voice in shaping local sustainability efforts.
- School Assemblies – Introducing climate topics in accessible, engaging formats.
- Public Campaigns – Raising awareness through creative outreach initiatives.

2. Deeper Engagement Activities

- Campaign Training – Helping young people design and lead climate campaigns.
- Green Careers Workshops – Exploring pathways into sustainability focused careers.
- Co-creating Educational Resources – Developing youth led climate education materials.
- Media Based Projects – Using storytelling, digital content, and social media for climate advocacy.
- Creative Climate Events – Events like the 2023 Climate Action Festival engage young people in climate action through interactive experiences.

3. School & College Based Activities

- Teacher Training on Climate Education – Supporting educators to embed sustainability in schools.
- Youth Led School Climate Initiatives – Encouraging students to take leadership roles in shaping school sustainability policies.

- Supporting schools to set up or develop their own eco-councils.

How These Activities Align with Impact Data

- Peer led activities, like Circle Keeper training, had the highest success rate (97%), showing that when young people take ownership of climate engagement, they stay motivated and committed.
- Community Conversations and School Community events had similar engagement levels (73% and 72% respectively) suggesting that the additional circle leader training provided to Circle keepers is a key differentiator in advancing engagement and motivating positive responses to climate resilience.

Outcomes: What Young People Gain from the Programme

RJ Working's approach equips young people with the skills, confidence, and motivation to become climate leaders.

1. Improved Capabilities (Knowledge & Skills)

- More informed about climate change, its causes, and its impact.
- Increased confidence in discussing climate issues and challenging misinformation.
- Ability to engage others in climate discussions using Restorative Practice.

2. Improved Motivations (Personal Commitment to Action)

- Greater emotional resilience, reducing climate anxiety and fostering climate resilience.
- Increased belief in collective action, strengthening a sense of shared purpose.
- Young people feel empowered to make a difference, knowing their voices matter.

3. Improved Opportunities (Networks & Influence)

- Stronger youth networks – Young people connect, collaborate, and support each other.
- Leadership opportunities – Participants gain skills in facilitation, campaigning, and public speaking.
- More involvement in school governance & community projects.

4. Improved Behaviours (Taking Action)

- Sustained personal climate actions – Making lifestyle choices that reduce environmental harm.
- Expanding climate conversations – Talking about climate issues with friends, family, and the wider community.
- Creating youth led campaigns & initiatives that influence real world change.

Impacts: Long Term Systemic Change

RJ Working's programme goes beyond individual learning, it shapes communities, institutions, and policy discussions.

For Young People:

- Sustained involvement in climate advocacy participants continue engaging beyond the project.
- More young people independently leading change, developing youth led climate solutions.
- Reduced climate anxiety, improving mental health and resilience.
- Increased use of Restorative Practice, ensuring climate conversations remain inclusive and constructive.

For the Wider Community:

- Youth voices increasingly heard in decision making spaces, including schools, councils, and climate planning.
- Tangible policy changes, such as schools embedding sustainability into food policies and operations.
- Cultural shifts, where communities develop stronger relationships with nature and sustainability becomes a core community value.

Conclusions: How RJ Working is Creating Lasting Change

RJ Working's Youth Led Climate Action Programme is designed to ensure that young people don't just learn about climate change, they lead the response.

This project has demonstrated the power of youth led conversations, leadership development, and policy influence. By embedding Restorative Practice, peer led facilitation, and structured leadership opportunities, RJ Working has built a foundation for long term youth led climate action in Cornwall.

By investing in young people as climate leaders, RJ Working is ensuring that youth led climate action is not just a short term intervention, but a long term movement that will shape Cornwall's sustainability future.

Project Outputs and Outcomes Against CLUP Criteria

The Youth Led Climate Conversation Project was designed to align closely with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Community Levelling Up Programme, which prioritises community empowerment, tackling deprivation, and promoting equitable growth. Through restorative practice, youth leadership, and community led climate engagement, the project has directly contributed to these goals.

Achievement of Project Specific Outputs & Timescales and Milestones

The project set out to achieve a range of tangible outputs designed to increase engagement, support youth led initiatives, and establish a framework for sustainable climate leadership within Cornwall. Opposite is a summary of key milestones and achievements.

Additional Milestones

- **Recruitment of Coordinator and Interns** – Achieved 01/07/2024. Some school engagement was delayed due to term timing.
- **Developing Key Influencer Engagement** – Achieved by September 2024.

Planned Start Date

Date achieved 01 / 07 / 2024

Achieved

Practical Completion Date

Date achieved 31 / 01 / 2025

Achieved

Financial Completion Date

Date achieved 14 / 02 / 2025

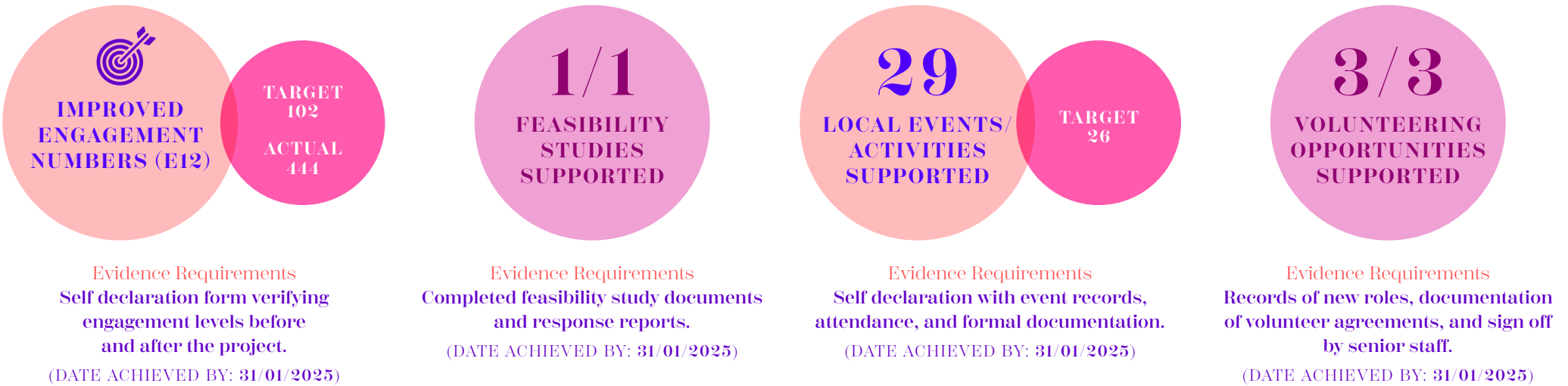
Achieved

Final Outputs/Outcomes Reported

Date to be achieved 31 / 03 / 2025

On track

Outputs & Outcomes Achieved



EQ8 – Levelling Up of Towns and Neighbourhoods through CloS

The Project aligns closely with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly CLUP which aims to empower communities and promote equitable growth.

Through its restorative practice approach, RJ Working has actively contributed to this agenda by:

- Revitalising community spaces: The project transformed local hubs into active discussion spaces, fostering engagement on sustainability and citizenship.

- Enhancing public participation: Young people have been engaged in discussions about their local environment, helping to shape future sustainability projects in line with the Cornwall Good Growth Fund.
- Encouraging community leadership: The project trained and supported young people to take active roles in their communities, ensuring that future decision making processes incorporate climate conscious perspectives.

Key Achievements:

- 12 Youth Led initiatives established, focusing on sustainability, waste reduction, and biodiversity enhancement.

- Increased participation in community driven climate resilience planning, connecting young people with local policymakers and councils.
- Raised awareness of Cornwall's Community Levelling Up objectives, supporting grassroots engagement in local development efforts.

By embedding climate action within the broader Levelling Up framework, RJ Working is ensuring that young people contribute meaningfully to the long term development of their towns and neighbourhoods.

EQ9 – Increased Capacity and Place Based Leadership in Communities

The Project has significantly contributed to increasing community capacity and place based leadership by equipping young people with the skills and confidence to facilitate climate action initiatives within their own communities.

Key Achievements:

- **Training of 65 Engagement Leaders (Circle Keepers):** These young leaders were equipped with facilitation skills through restorative practice training, enabling them to lead climate focused discussions and activities.
- **29 Community Led Conversation Circles:** Each discussion group brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds, with up to 50 participants per session in two events, fostering cross generational dialogue and strengthening local decision making around climate resilience.
- **Increased Community Engagement and Action:** Participants have since gone on to develop and advocate for sustainability initiatives, contributing to a stronger culture of local leadership and activism.
- **Improved Collaborative Networks:** The project facilitated relationships between young people, community groups, and local decision makers, ensuring that youth voices are represented in local governance and sustainability efforts.

• **Empowered Peer Led Climate Advocacy:**

Participants gained the confidence and tools to independently run campaigns, train their peers, and continue fostering community driven sustainability efforts.

These activities align with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly's Community Levelling Up priorities by enhancing local leadership capacity, building networks of active citizens, and ensuring that communities are empowered to drive forward place based climate action.

EQ10 – Advancing Equality of Opportunity (Equality Act 2010)

The project prioritised inclusion and accessibility, ensuring that young people from diverse socio economic backgrounds could engage meaningfully in climate conversations. Climate issues are often perceived as middle class concerns, but this initiative made climate relevant to all communities by linking it to poverty, social justice, and well being.

Key Actions:

- Proactive outreach to young people from underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds.
- Integration of climate justice themes, connecting climate change to everyday challenges such as housing, food security, and employment.
- Development of an Equality and Diversity Policy, ensuring that climate action is inclusive and representative of Cornwall's communities.

By embedding equity and inclusion within the Youth Led Climate Conversation Project, RJ Working has ensured that climate action remains accessible, relevant, and impactful for all young people, regardless of background.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project was delivered on time, despite a slow start, and within budget. Challenges have been met proactively, the team showing a strong work ethic and commitment to achieve the project outcomes and outputs. Targets have been met and in some instances exceeded and the general feeling within the organisation is a project that has been a success in terms of its direct impact in the communities it has worked and indirectly in raising the profile of the organisation and the climate crisis, in a constructive, supportive way.

The Youth Led Climate Conversation Project has demonstrated that young people are not just passive recipients of climate education, they are leaders, facilitators, and change makers. The project has not only sparked dialogue but also led to meaningful action, aligning with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Community Levelling Up Programme.

Key Achievements:

- **Community Empowerment & Climate Action** – 12 Youth Led initiatives launched, including waste reduction campaigns, biodiversity projects, and school based sustainability efforts.
- **Place Based Leadership Development** – 65 young people trained as Circle Keepers, equipped with the skills to facilitate climate conversations.
- **Expanding Community Engagement** – 29 climate conversation events held, strengthening cross generational dialogue and community led action.
- **Addressing Inequality in Climate Conversations** – The initiative proactively engaged under represented groups, ensuring inclusivity and challenging the perception that climate action is a middle class issue.

These achievements demonstrate the power of youth leadership and provide a compelling case for continued investment in the programme.

Key Reflections:

- The project has significantly increased climate literacy, with young people more confident in challenging misinformation and advocating for action.
- The Theory of Change model has successfully guided young people from early engagement to leadership roles, ensuring sustained participation beyond the initial project phase.
- The project has directly contributed to Cornwall's Levelling Up agenda, strengthening community cohesion, youth led initiatives, and local policy influence.

- By embedding Restorative Practice principles, RJ Working has fostered inclusive, trust based climate conversations, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued.

Looking Ahead: Scaling Impact and Ensuring Long Term Change

RJ Working is committed to scaling and deepening the impact of this programme by:

- **Supporting Schools in Meeting the September 2025 Climate Action Plan Requirement** – Ensuring that student led action is at the heart of school sustainability strategies.
- **Increasing Organisational Capacity** – Securing multi year funding, expanding staff roles, and strengthening volunteer networks.
- **Advocating for Systemic Change** – Engaging policymakers and councils to embed climate action in local governance.
- **Enhancing Biodiversity Engagement** – Partnering with other conservation groups to provide hands on environmental opportunities for young people.
- **Developing Long Term Leadership Pathways** – Creating structured alumni networks to ensure ongoing youth involvement in climate leadership.

The impact of this project extends beyond immediate engagement; it has laid the foundation for a new generation of climate conscious leaders.

By prioritising youth leadership, community collaboration, and systemic advocacy, RJ Working will continue to drive meaningful change, ensuring that young people are not just participants in climate conversations, but key drivers of community transformation.

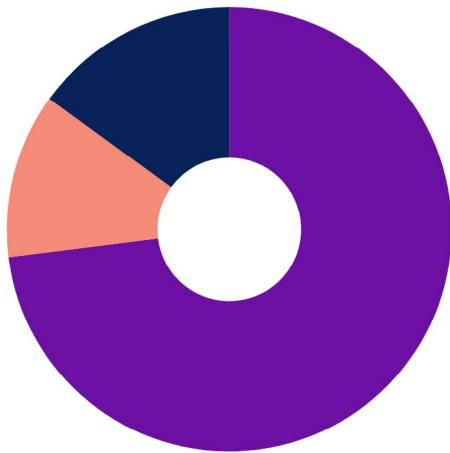


Appendices

Visualisation of Engagement Results

Community Conversations

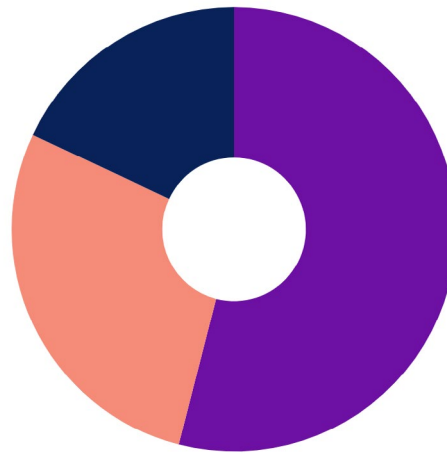
“Do you feel more engaged with climate awareness?”



■ YES (73) ■ NO (12) ■ N/A (15)

Primary schools conversations

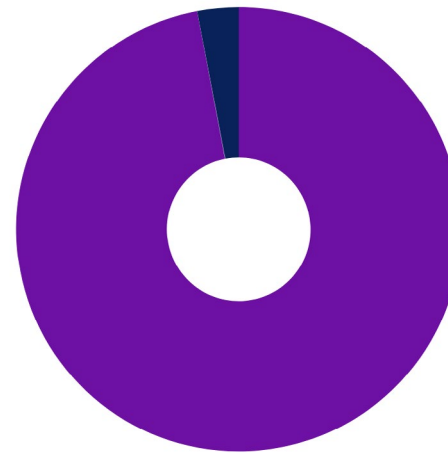
“Do you feel more engaged with climate awareness?”



■ YES (54) ■ NO (28) ■ N/A (18)

Circle Keeper Training

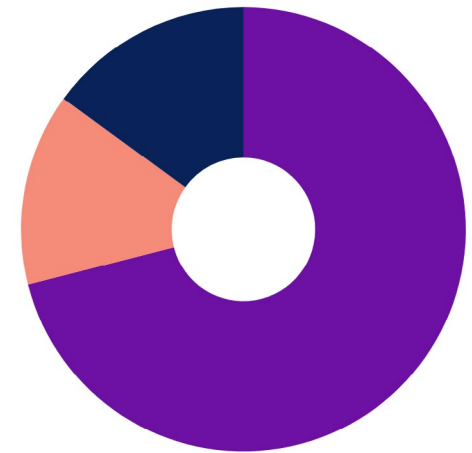
“Do you feel more engaged with climate awareness?”



■ YES (97) ■ N/A (3)

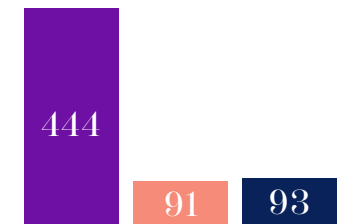
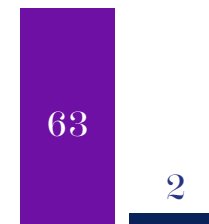
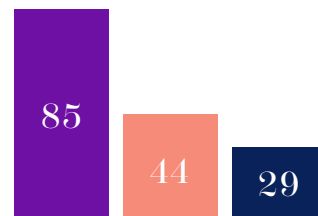
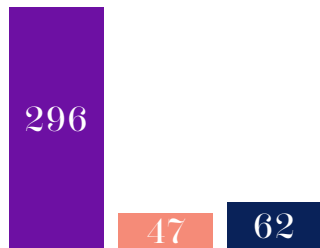
Overall Results

“Do you feel more engaged with climate awareness?”



■ YES (71) ■ NO (14) ■ N/A (15)

Overall Response Numbers



With thanks

Contact:

07502 563240

chris.cotter@jolaassociates.com

*Your trusted
business partner*
Jola
Associates

Specialising in Social Return on Investment
(SROI)

