

National science engagement programme 'powers up' over 5,000 young scientists

A national science engagement programme launched last year to inspire more young people in Scotland to consider a future career in the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) industries has engaged more than 5,000 young people.

'Powering Up' began in June 2017 and over the past year, thanks to a £150,000 funding boost from the ScottishPower Foundation, National Museums Scotland has delivered workshops to schools in multiple deprivation areas situated throughout Midlothian, South Lanarkshire and West Dumbartonshire, and extended the reach of STEM activity across the country through community events, science festivals, family activities and a schools engagement programme exploring renewable energy.

The outreach part of the programme was created to enable harder-to-reach communities in Scotland to benefit from National Museums Scotland's expertise and world-class science and technology collections. To do this, National Museums Scotland linked up with heritage attractions across the country, including New Lanark World Heritage Site, National Mining Museum Scotland in Newtongrange and the Scottish Maritime Museum's Denny Tank Museum in Dumbarton, who played host to 60 educational events.

In the first year of the outreach programme, 11 schools and 453 youngsters aged 9-11 were given the opportunity to participate in renewable energy workshops. Each session focused on bringing science to life through hands-on activities relating to wind, solar and hydroelectric energy ultimately to encourage pupils to study STEM subjects at secondary school and to consider a career in the industry in

their future.



One of the primary barriers facing schools looking to participate in external activities such as Powering Up are the travel costs for students. Funding from the ScottishPower Foundation enabled National Museums Scotland to offer transport bursaries for each school to visit their local museums and participate in the programme.

As well as funding to deliver practical support with science workshops, the ScottishPower Foundation's funding has also enabled National Museums to employ a Science Engagement Manager and a Science Engagement and Outreach Assistant to build external partnerships with researchers, scientists, engineers and schools.

Clare Meakin, Science Engagement Manager at National Museums Scotland, said: "National Museums Scotland has a unique role to play in inspiring young people to take up STEM subjects and ultimately embark upon STEM careers. The generous support from ScottishPower Foundation has enabled us to deliver a world-class science engagement programme to engage people across the breadth of the country in science and mathematics."

Ann McKechin Executive Officer and Trustee at ScottishPower Foundation added: “The ScottishPower Foundation’s work with National Museums Scotland aims to get young people passionate about STEM subjects. By taking the substantial collections and first-class expertise of National Museums Scotland out into the community, we have been able to engage with students living in Scotland’s harder-to-reach communities and ensure that they get to experience some of the country’s most fascinating inventions and innovations and gain an awareness of the incredible career opportunities the world of STEM presents.”

The funding from the ScottishPower Foundation is part of a four-year partnership with National Museums Scotland, which has already included a donation for the National Museum of Scotland’s Energise Gallery and the flagship education programme Get Energised.