

National STEM programme sparks interest

A national science initiative has sparked an increase in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning across Scotland over the last six months, with over 2,000 school pupils taking part in a series of interactive workshops and science shows.

The Powering Up initiative has been created and executed by National Museums Scotland thanks to funding from the ScottishPower Foundation. It has focussed on expanding its reach to rural schools and areas of multiple deprivation in 2018 through to 2019.



Megan Crossan age 11 and Caitlin Boyd age 11

The programme launched in 2017 to inspire more young people in Scotland to consider a future career in STEM industries, with

each session focused on bringing science to life through hands-on activities relating to wind, solar and hydroelectric energy.

During the last six months, Powering Up has extended its school reach by 63% and has engaged 44% more pupils throughout Scotland compared to its last term.

The project's additional community events – such as the Midlothian Science Festival, Biggar Science Festival, Edinburgh City Council 'Discover' Programme and National Museums' Science Saturdays – have helped reach a further 1,120 members of the public with interactive renewable energy workshops and science shows.

This year, funding from the ScottishPower Foundation has facilitated a series of school trips to local museums to help more young people in Scotland participate in Powering Up by offering transport bursaries.



Megan Crossan, Caitlin Boyd, Eric Kalbarczyk with Craig Sinclair of National Museum of Scotland

Last week, pupils from Balloch Primary School took part in a workshop at the Scottish Maritime Museum in Dumbarton, where they worked together to generate examples of wind, solar and

hydro power. Pupils were also immersed in the science behind the world-famous Victorian shipbuilding trade in a tour of the Denny Ship Model Experiment Tank – the world’s oldest working model experiment tank. During the tour the group stepped back in time to see William Denny and Brothers’ inventions in action at what was one of Scotland’s most important and innovative shipyards.

Clare Meakin, Science Engagement Manager at National Museums Scotland, said: “We’re now at the half-way point of the 2018/2019 Powering Up programme and to have boosted the number of schools and pupils engaged with the project is something we’re very proud of.

“Funding from the ScottishPower Foundation has helped us broaden the programme’s reach and has allowed schools from far and wide to take part in museum visits and in-class workshops, which have been a great success with pupils and teachers.”

Ann McKechin, Executive Officer and Trustee at ScottishPower Foundation, added: “The ScottishPower Foundation is committed to supporting STEM learning and it’s great to see such a huge increase in participation since the launch of Powering Up in 2017. By showing young people that these subjects can be applied to many areas of life through exciting education workshops, they’re much more likely to strive to engage with these fields in the future.”

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.