



Young People's Voices

Insight and Impact Report

May 2024

Executive Summary

GoCommunity Rail Partnership CIC (GoCRP CIC) connects communities with transport, planning, housing and public sectors, using creative engagement methods. We aim to improve access to sustainable transport, particularly by enhancing rail usage for leisure and tourism. Our vision is a society where transport is inclusive, sustainable and better connects people.

We engage young people through evidence-based methods, placing their needs and views at the heart of our project design. Our inclusive approach ensures diverse youth participation.

You can work with us to gain deep insight and evidence from our existing datasets and partner with us in new engagements with young people.

Our programmes with young people have shown that:

- Safety is very important for young people – psychological and environmental safety, and travel certainty. Our programmes help to address young people’s safety concerns, fostering their confidence and building their knowledge about safe rail travel.
- Many young people lack confidence in train travel. Our programmes provide hands-on travel experiences, significantly boosting confidence among participants.
- Creative projects engage young people with travel and their communities, fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- While young people value sustainability, safety, convenience, cost often takes precedence. Our programmes educate and promote the environmental benefits of using public transport.
- Activities that connect young people with nature, and with each other, enhance their wellbeing, fostering a sense of belonging and community.

Our Programmes tackle barriers to train travel, such as safety concerns, lack of confidence, and perceived costs, opening new opportunities for young people.

You can work with us to leverage our insights and impact your organisation's engagement with, and knowledge of, young people. Our programme themes include:

- Safety and Affordability: ensuring travel is safe, affordable, and convenient.
- Breaking Barriers: improving rural transport to retain young talent locally.
- Exploring Nature: facilitating safe, confident train travel to access natural spaces.
- Inclusivity: welcoming young people from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Bridging the Gap: providing new experiences and skills through rail travel.
- Celebrating Diversity: connecting communities and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Empowering and Inspiring: engaging young people in sustainability and community projects.
- Sparking Creativity: making travel fun and memorable through creative activities.
- Supporting Local Talent: transforming local transport hubs into creative outlets.

Work with us to make travel safer, more convenient, and vibrant for young people.

Let's increase your organisation's insight and impact together!

Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	4
GoCRP’s Approach to Engaging with Young People.....	4
GoCRP Young People Programme’s Thematic Insights.....	6
Safety.....	7
Work With Us for Safety.....	8
Confidence.....	9
Work With Us For Confidence.....	10
Creativity.....	10
Work With Us for Creativity	13
Sustainability.....	13
Work With Us for Sustainability.....	14
Connection for Wellbeing.....	14
Work With Us for Wellbeing.....	15
Breaking Barriers.....	16
Work With Us to Break Barriers.....	16
Partner With Us for Change For Young People.....	17

Introduction

GoCommunity Rail Partnership CIC (GoCRP CIC) brings local grassroots community activity and insights together with the transport industry to deliver a wide range of activities to improve access to sustainable transport, with a particular focus on how rail can be better used for leisure and tourism.

GoCRP CIC's vision is a society where transport is inclusive, sustainable and better connects people. GoCRP has 5 key aims:

- To contribute to the visitor experience and long-term economic sustainability of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire;
- To improve accessibility to public transport;
- To improve the integration of transport through sustainable modes;
- To increase community involvement and diversity of users at all Gloucestershire's and Oxfordshire's railway stations;
- To provide community insight to shape future proposals for rail investment and services across the counties.

Over the last few years GoCRP has been using quantitative and qualitative engagement and evaluation methods with young people to gain insight and increase impact of projects related to sustainable planning and transport. This report showcases the findings of youth engagement and highlights ways in which you can work with us to increase the insight and impact of your organisation's work, whether you want to start or improve engagement with young people.

GoCRP's Approach to Engaging with Young People

The core of GoCRP's approach to engaging with young people is to respond to a particular challenge through action and insight – as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. GoCRP’s Approach to Working with Young People – a Project Example

Challenge	Response	Action	Insights
Net outward migration among young people from a county	GoCRP developed a Youth and Education pillar of activity	The Pillar provides support to young people, including those who are under-represented	Pivotal role of transport and travel in young people wellbeing and their decision to remain or leave

Figure 1. GoCRP Programme’s Approach to Working with Young People



GoCRP's evidence-based approach to designing and carrying out projects with young people is underpinned by solid research, not only by including young people but by putting them at the very heart of project design. This approach ensures that young people's needs and views in relation to transport are genuinely explored and their voices are truly represented.

Through careful practises and partnership working, GoCRP ensures that various groups of young people are involved in research and activities programmes, including disabled young people, and those from underrepresented backgrounds.

You can work with GoCRP to gain deep insights into young people's experiences, needs and wants. GoCRP can help you to increase your impact on young people's lives through our engagement programmes.

GoCRP Young People Programme's Thematic Insights

Thematic insights that emerge from GoCRP's programmes with young people about their views and experiences of travel are:

- Safety;
- Confidence;
- Creativity;
- Sustainability;
- Connection, belonging and well-being;
- Overcoming barriers and creating opportunities.

Key impacts for young people that have emerged from GoCRP's programmes are:

- Increasing confidence in train travel among programme participants.
- Helping young people from underprivileged communities overcome barriers to travel.
- Helping young people to become more aware of the opportunities available to them.

In 2020, GoCRP consulted 850 young people regarding sustainable transport: 80% of respondents identified public transport as the smarter environmental choice. In 2023, GoCRP carried out a more in-depth survey about young people's travel habits and attitudes towards sustainable travel. A focus group discussion lay the grounds for the survey questionnaire, which was designed by a group of young researchers. 584 young people took part in this consultation.

Safety

Safety was the most important consideration for young people in their choice of travel options. This was borne out by various data sources in GoCRP's programmes.

The concept of safety was understood in different ways. It could mean any of the following to the young people:

- **Physical safety** – being safe from physical abuse or exposure to physical harm.
- **Psychological safety** – confidence in being able to find one's own way around a train station, knowing what to do and whom to approach if things go wrong while travelling, a sense of welcome and inclusion.
- **Environmental safety** – feeling safe and welcome in the travel environment, feeling comfortable when travelling, having a designated space for young people with disabilities and learning difficulties.
- **Travel certainty** – reliability of mode of travel, clearly marked routes, timetables, availability of travel maps, being able to get from point A to B with minimum disruption and risk.

When questioned about their top priority when travelling for the Youth Transport Survey, 78% of participants chose safety. Feeling safe is most important in making travel choices to young people across the UK, and particularly key for under 16s. Many young people reported they did *not* feel safe when using public transport (41% of respondents), especially girls and young women (44%), and transgender people (59%). 54.6% of respondents reported feeling unsafe while *waiting* for public transport, with black respondents reporting feeling significantly less safe (68.5%).

Qualitative data collected through the Movement and Getaway projects, funded by the Department for Transport, demonstrated that experiences of racial discrimination on public

transport were indeed common among black and brown youth. The feedback collected brought to light the particular safety concerns of young people of colour and/or minority cultural backgrounds.

These young people expressed strong safety concerns around being accosted by ‘weirdos’ and ‘strange people’ when travelling, and being harassed or judged for looking different (e.g. young Muslim girls wearing hijabs).

Through the Movement and Getaway projects, GoCRP have helped young people explore and build feelings of safety around travelling by train. This was achieved through:

- **Facilitating discussions** with young people around what makes them feel safe and unsafe when it comes to travel, ensuring their voices are heard and represented.
- **Building confidence** around rail travel through trips and educational activities.

Learning what to expect from train travel, how to use trains safely, how to plan one’s journey, what to do if things go wrong, and whom to approach for help proved to be of great importance for overcoming safety concerns. This is borne out in the feedback from the Getaway project:

“What if people keep looking/staring, I miss the train and random strangers talk to me. I can sit away from people, take something to do like read a book or do a crossword, I can look at next available trains through to catch or the next bus. I learnt that there is passenger assist for disabled or people who need help getting on or off the train.”

“I feel unsafe, who will I encounter, what if I lose my ticket, there's no signal, my phone dies or I don't know where I'm going. I learnt I can talk to the train conductor or staff, there is CCTV, I can sit away from people I don't know and I can check my route map and book tickets beforehand.”

“Things that make me worry: suspicious people sitting next to me, not knowing when to get off, so getting lost, when people stare at me because of my hijab. I learnt you can talk to the driver and staff and there are CCTV cameras. The drivers and staff can help you.”

Work With Us for Safety

Understanding the importance of safety is key to encouraging young people to choose rail travel. GoCRP research and initiatives have demonstrated that:

- There is a clear need to develop policies and initiatives ensuring travel safety for all young people.
- Safety includes security measures and protecting passengers from any form of abuse but also: welcoming and inclusive travel spaces, information and education around the practicalities of travelling by train and what to do if things go wrong, and reliability of transport.
- Communications and messaging aimed at promoting rail travel to young people need to address safety concerns and clearly explain what safety measures railways provide, how young passengers can ensure their safety when travelling, and who they can reach out to if feeling unsafe.
- Safety policies must take into consideration the particular threats young people from minority backgrounds may face.

Confidence

Our research shows that confidence is a key barrier to using trains, especially for under 16s and young people from minority ethnic and disadvantaged backgrounds. 38% respondents to the Youth Transport Survey reported they did not use the train. This indicates they might not have had any previous experience of train travel, which may make young people feel anxious about using trains independently.

The results above underpinned GoCRP's activities aimed at creating opportunities for young people to experience travelling by train and building their confidence in using trains independently. GoCRP was highly effective in achieving this objective with 70% of the Movement project participants feeling more confident in using the train as a result.

The variety and scope of the opportunities created is worth mentioning. These included co-designing the journeys, day trips for schools and organisations, as well as art performances taking place on platforms and on trains (by Strike A Light's Youth Dance Company and Youth Theatre). The young people gained experience and confidence in a train station environment, following a journey itinerary, and building confidence in new social settings.

Significantly, it can be expected that this support in building confidence will have a ripple effect on the individuals who took part in these activities but also, through them, on other people in their environment. Many activity participants said that they felt inspired to start travelling more by train, some conquered fears that were limiting access to wider life opportunities:

"I was terrified of being on a train platform for ages, and because it was a rational fear, I didn't think I'd get over it, but today I did. Incredible..."

The quote above illustrates how life-changing participating in a single train journey can be for the individual, and how important it is to provide young people of various backgrounds with opportunities to experience train travel.

The wide-ranging effects of carrying out such initiatives are worth considering in developing future programmes aimed at supporting young people in building the confidence to start travelling by train.

Work With Us For Confidence

- Providing young people with opportunities to experience train travel is a key step in building their confidence to travel independently but their effects are much wider ranging.
- Being supported in experiencing travel also helps overcome mental barriers around being in a station environment and travelling and opens young people's minds to various possibilities and a different way of living

Creativity

GoCRP run creative programmes with young people. As with confidence building, tapping into young people's creativity may have significant ripple effects, beyond the lives of the projects. Creativity can play a key role in engaging young people with travel and their local areas. Our Programmes use creative and traditional methods to gain insights about young people needs and experiences (see Figure 2). Creative methods can be used as a tool to research their needs, to engage them with train travel, and build connections. Creativity is important for messaging around travel, in shaping travel behaviours, in building confidence and community relationships, in opening them up to new experiences, giving them a sense of inclusion, ownership and belonging, and – longer-term – in providing the opportunities enabling them to stay within their local areas.

Figure 2. GoCRP Programme Methods to Engage With Young People



Many of the activities GoCRP develop in programmes, in collaboration with partners like you, incorporate creative research methodologies and support other forms of creativity.

For example:

- Exploring young people's views through art (creative engagements with the Al Ashraf School)
- Creating art for public spaces (the 'What Can I Do?' exhibition)
- Creating new journey itineraries and maps (e.g. with Music Works)
- Art performances on platforms and on trains (e.g. with Strike A Light)
- Creating communication tools aimed at young people (at the young researcher's Bootcamp).

Incorporating creativity in the various activities means that you can:

- Gain deep insight into young people's views on train travel, their needs, preferences, and perceived barriers to using travel.
- Introduce young artists to train travel (e.g. 72% of the performers from Strike A Light's Youth Theatre who staged a performance on trains had never been on a train before).
- Create fun and enjoyable experiences for young people as well as other travellers (through performances on stations and trains).
- Show young people that train travel can be a creative experience.
- Promote cultural understanding and celebrate diversity through initiatives including underrepresented communities (e.g. the Black History Map project).
- Co-produce creative and interesting assets for communicating information about rail and public transport in a way that appeals to young people.

When they participated in Programmes, young people said:

'The journey was good as I am with my best friends, joking and laughing. I had the best time climbing.'

'The train was amazing. It was my first time on the train, so it was exciting.'

'We don't really do things like this, that's why we were excited, it's nice when you're with your friends.'

Work With Us for Creativity

- Applying creative research methods is an excellent way for gaining an in-depth understanding into young people's attitudes to and concerns around using train travel.
- Incorporating creativity in initiatives and communications related to transport is an effective way of engaging young people.
- Transport can play a wider role in communities by becoming a space for creativity, supporting art and local artists, local causes and building bridges between communities.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a crucial consideration for organisations and businesses in transport, planning, housing and public sectors. Understanding of young people's attitudes towards sustainability is explored by GoCRP.

In 2020, GoCRP consulted 850 young people regarding sustainable transport: 80% of respondents identified public transport as the smarter environmental choice. In 2023, GoCRP carried out a more in-depth survey about travel habits and attitudes towards sustainable travel. A focus group discussion lay the grounds for the survey questionnaire, which was designed by a group of young researchers. 584 young people took part in this consultation.

While sustainable travel was important to these young people, with 45% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the environmental impact of a journey affects the way they travel, their choice of travel was guided by other priorities, safety being the top one. 78% of young

people said that safety was their biggest concern when choosing how to travel. Convenience and affordability were the other top priorities. Significantly, young people perceived train travel to be on average three times more expensive than it is.

Another key finding from the research was confusion around what sustainability actually meant and sustainability measures. The research showed that although young people cared about environmental issues when considering choice of travel, they did not have a solid understanding of what sustainability meant and how to evaluate it. 56% of respondents did not know what a carbon emission calculator was, 81% of respondents had never used one, and 62% said carbon emission figures did not make sense to them. These findings pointed to a need for sustainability education for young people and improving the messaging around the environmental benefits of public transport aimed at them.

Through the research carried out as part of the Communicating Sustainability in Community Rail project, GoCRP gained an in-depth understanding of young people's perceptions of sustainability and identified the need for adjusting sustainability communication aimed at young audiences. This led GoCRP to commission communication messaging co-created by young people at a Bootcamp on 15th April 2023. At the Bootcamp, the young people created marketing resources: 3 posters for use in stations, at bus stops, in schools or for social media, and 3 social media graphics and 2 videos for Instagram and other social media platforms young people use.

GoCRP have produced key messages in activity packs to encourage young people to use public transport and travel more sustainably. Young people then gain a better understanding of the sustainability aspects of train travel.

Work With Us for Sustainability

- Environmental issues are important to young people in making travel choices but cannot override other priority factors, such as safety, convenience, and cost.
- Young people are uncertain what sustainability means exactly and how to measure it: many young people do not understand or relate to carbon calculation methods.

- Taking the above into consideration, there is a need to improve messaging around the environmental benefits of public transport aimed at young people to promote modal shift.

Connection for Wellbeing

The GoCRP activity programmes for young people also have been aimed at building connections to support young people's wellbeing: connections between the young people and the nature around them, but also between the young people themselves. Inclusion of under-represented communities and building relationships with these communities were foundational to the programme.

GoCRP's approach to developing programmes for young people was underpinned by various research data on young people and loneliness, the well-being benefits of being in nature, and the considerably lower rates of black people accessing nature in comparison to white British populations. While the well-being benefits of nature are well-known, a 2017 study by Natural England found that just 26.2% of black people spent time in the countryside, compared with 44.2% of white people. A separate report showed that only 1% of visitors to UK national parks come from BAME backgrounds. In addition, national research showed that 40% of 16–24-year-olds in the UK felt lonely 'often or always.'

These data and local-level data informed the decision to focus on a particular area in Gloucester - Barton and Tredworth. GoCRP developed a programme of activities aimed at building connections between young people as well as connections with nature via travel.

GoCRP ran two key projects for groups of young people from Barton and Tredworth – Movement and Getaway. The projects aimed at introducing young people to the natural environments and outdoor spaces and help them build connections with each other, as well as building confidence to travel independently and learning new skills.

The projects were very well received by the young people: 83% of participants reported they enjoyed spending time with others and forming new friendships. One of the participants said they '*loved spending time with other people and learning new social skills.*'

Building more community connections and cohesion were also important outcomes of the projects. Young people of colour who participated in the rural activities got to know local places that they previously felt excluded from in a safe and supported way. This led to greater sense of ownership, belonging and opportunity.

Work With Us for Wellbeing

- Rail travel can be a gateway for building connections with one another and with nature for young people through organised trips and activities.
- Such activities also build a wider sense of belonging – to the community, to the area, as well as increased sense of well-being.
- There is huge value in undertaking activities which facilitate discovering nature and socialising via train travel among young people, and especially those from underprivileged communities and areas.

Breaking Barriers

Overcoming barriers to train travel and creating opportunities for young people to explore nature, build connections, learn new skills, and improve mental health lay at the heart of all the GoCRP activities.

GoCRP research identified the main barriers to train travel. These included:

- Safety;
- Lack of confidence to use the train, anxiety around travel and not knowing what to do when things go wrong;
- Lack of knowledge on how to access train travel, plan a journey, or make use of available discounts, such as railway cards;
- Price, not being able to afford rail travel, perceiving train travel as much more expensive than it is;
- Lack of opportunities to experience train travel, not being used to using trains, not seeing train travel as a possibility.

The youth activities led by GoCRP have created opportunities for young people, and especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, to familiarise themselves with train travel, what it entails, what opportunities it creates, and overcome the barriers identified. Overall, the young people who participated in the activities, felt these really helped them build the confidence to travel by train and overcome their fears. They also provided young people with the opportunity to discover new places, which opened their eyes to a whole world of possibilities within their reach.

As one of the project participants said:

“It was great to get away from home life and to experience new things. It made me realise there’s more out there than we know.”

The projects also created other opportunities for young people, such as being creative, opportunities to perform in a new environment, or learning new skills.

Work With Us to Break Barriers

- Activities aimed at helping young people overcome fears and anxieties around rail travel are of crucial importance for raising the next generation of travellers by train.
- Providing opportunities for exploring train travel and the local countryside is often an eye-opener for young people, especially from deprived areas and underprivileged populations, and can create breakthroughs in perceptions of what is possible for them.
- Such initiatives are most likely to have a ripple effect with young people gaining awareness of new opportunities and sharing this with their peers and other people in their communities.

Partner With Us for Change For Young People

By partnering with us, you can access our deep insights about what young people experience, their needs and their wants. You can enhance your decision-making and activities by basing it on evidence we have gathered and analysed through our creative engagement with young people. We can also carry out primary research with young people on your behalf and provide you with robust data to inform your strategic direction.

Themes that we can provide evidence-led insight on and partner with you to explore further are:

- **Safety and Affordability**

When it comes to choosing a mode of travel, safety is paramount. Let's make sustainable travel the top choice for young people by ensuring it's safe, affordable, and convenient.

- **Breaking Barriers**

Transport limitations in rural areas often push young people out, creating barriers to work and leisure. We can help you to improve transport convenience, safety, and reliability to encourage young people to stay local and thrive.

- **Exploring Nature**

Our projects show the importance of helping young people overcome travel barriers. By introducing them to train travel safely and confidently, we open a gateway to nature and the numerous benefits it offers.

- **Inclusivity**

It's crucial to support young people from underrepresented backgrounds to access nature. We can use evidence to support you to help young people feel welcomed and valued in rural environments.

- **Bridging the Gap**

Rail travel creates many opportunities for inclusion, especially for young people who are seldom heard. We can help you to provide new experiences, connections and skills for young people.

- **Celebrate Diversity**

Initiatives like the GoCRP's Black History Map use transport to represent and connect communities, fostering a sense of ownership, belonging, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

- **Empowering and Inspiring**

Engaging young people in sustainability projects and community projects gives them a sense of belonging and purpose. We can support you to use creative ways of working with young people for their benefit while having a positive impact on communities.

- **Making an Impact**

Partnering with us gives you opportunities to work with young people in new ways. This is crucial for deep insight and planning, and for giving young people opportunities for personal and professional growth.

- **Sparking Creativity**

We have created transport spaces that are perfect for sparking creativity for young people, by organising exhibitions and plays. We can help you to make travel fun and memorable for young people.

- **Supporting Local Talent**

Many creative young people feel the need to move to big cities for opportunities. Together, we can change that by making local transport hubs for creativity and outlets for local artists.

By working together, we can make travel safer, more convenient, and more vibrant for young people.

Partner with us to increase your insight and impact!

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