

The Young STEM Leader (YSL) Programme: Inspiring and developing young people through STEM

A new Scottish programme which will give children and young people the chance to develop their personal skills through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is being piloted this month (June).

Aiming to spark greater interest and participation in STEM, the YSL programme will give children and young people the opportunity to lead, inspire and mentor their peers through the creation and delivery of STEM activities within schools, Early Years Centres, community groups and youth initiatives.

Young STEM Leaders (YSLs) can do anything from running a coding club at lunch-time with friends to helping a classmate struggling with their coursework to dreaming up and leading a unique STEM activity or event in their community. The programme encompasses a wide definition of STEM, including gaming, music, digital, design and the environment.

For younger pupils, the YSL programme offers a great chance to unleash their creativity and get hands-on either in the classroom or with a community group. For teens, it represents an excellent way to develop personal skills that will help them stand out from the crowd with employers and university/college admissions.

As well as helping the Young STEM Leader (YSL) to develop important 'soft' skills such as leadership, active listening, mentoring, organising and creativity, it is hoped that the programme will motivate YSLs to continue with their STEM studies and embark on a career in STEM.

The Scottish Government's Strategy for STEM Education and Training (2017) [1] has committed to 'establish a new Young STEM Leaders programme to stimulate and strengthen the development of peer mentoring and inspiration in STEM for children and young people by children and young people.'

The YSL programme is being funded by the Scottish Government led by SSERC and a range of partners, including the Scottish Science Centres, Scottish STEM Ambassador Hubs, Science Festivals, YouthLink Scotland, Young Scot, Children in Scotland, Education Scotland and the Scottish Mentoring Network.

Graeme Rough, YSL project manager, said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity for children and young people to discover, create, inspire and lead their peers, in the process developing a range of highly-desirable and transferable personal skills. As well as improving their own STEM skills and knowledge, those working with the YSLs will also be inspired by these positive young role models.'

The YSL programme will be rolled out across Scotland by 2020. More information on the YSL programme is available at www.sserc.scot or from the project team at ysl@sserc.scot. <<

Levels of the YSL Programme

The Young STEM Leader (YSL) programme will be non-formally accredited at Curricular Levels 2, 3 and 4, underpinned by a framework that identifies the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of a Young STEM Leader at each level.

SCQF Levels 4, 5 and 6 will be formally accredited and certificated, underpinned by outcomes and performance criteria for each level.

Every YSL will receive digital and face-to-face training on the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to complete each level.

Reference

[1] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/science-technology-engineering-mathematics-education-training-strategy-scotland/>.

