

## Part A - General Information

### Organisation

YESfest

### Organisation Type/Structure

Community Interest Company (CIC)

### Theme/Nature of Project

Children, Youth Development and Families

### Company/CIC Registration Number (if applicable)

16118761

### Name of Lead Contact

Alex Bell

### How did you find out about the Awards?

Recommended by a Friend/Colleague or Other Person

### Website

<http://www.YES-fest.com>

### Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

<https://linktr.ee/YESfest>

## Part B - Project Proposal

### Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

YESfest's mission is to scale connection between children worldwide through serious in intent/playful in execution eco-summit festivals that inspire nature connection, climate action, and global youth solidarity. Experiential learning, knowledge, skills and community-building to grow leadership and Earth-stewardship skills for 8–10-year-olds supported by teen and adult peers globally.

### Situation (250 words)

Children are growing up in a time of climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and social division. Many feel overwhelmed, anxious, or powerless in the face of these challenges. In the UK alone, over 70% of young people report feeling worried about the future of the planet (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2021). Yet, formal education systems often lack the time, tools, or training to foster meaningful nature connection, environmental literacy, or climate hope.

YESfest was created to fill this gap. Since 2023, we've delivered 10 events in 10 countries – both in-person and online – for over 1,200 young people aged 8–14. These joyful eco-summits mix music, play, hands-on learning, and global youth exchange to spark agency, imagination, and collaboration. Youth delegates share ideas, perform, camp outdoors, and build a sense of belonging – to each other and the natural world.

We know that early, positive connection to nature is a powerful driver of lifelong environmental action. We also know that children feel more optimistic and motivated when they see they're not alone. However, these experiences remain limited in scale, time-bound, and dependent on volunteer effort and sporadic funding.

We're at a pivotal point: with growing international interest and partnerships forming across schools, NGOs, and educators, the demand is clear. What's needed now is strategic support to build infrastructure, develop consistent programming, and ensure long-term, equitable access – so this youth-led movement can truly grow roots and flourish

### Complication (250 words)

The underlying problem is that children's voices are often excluded from climate conversations, and their emotional wellbeing is overlooked. While climate education is gaining ground, it tends to focus on facts and fear – not feelings, imagination, or action. At the same time, children are spending less time outdoors

than ever before, with UK studies showing they spend less time in nature than prisoners. This disconnection fuels eco-anxiety, apathy, and a sense of powerlessness, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have least access to nature and the fewest opportunities to be heard.

This issue requires urgent action because we are in a critical window for shaping the values, mental health, and agency of the next generation. The changing climate will most affect today's children – yet they are rarely given safe, supportive spaces to explore solutions, take part, and feel hope. The problem persists because current systems – education, funding, and policy – are not built to prioritise youth-led, playful, outdoor, and creative approaches to climate action.

YESfest offers a joyful, scalable model that fills this gap. What's changed is that we now have proof of concept: YESfest events are working. They connect children across cultures, boost confidence, and create powerful ripple effects in schools and communities. The opportunity is to invest now – to turn one-off events into a year-round, global programme, to train facilitators, and to build a sustainable infrastructure that amplifies young voices and transforms eco-anxiety into belonging, action, and hope.

### **Solution (250 words)**

Our solution is to scale and sustain YESfest as a global movement of youth-led eco-festivals and year-round programming that centres nature connection, play, and creative action. We have already piloted YESfest in 10 countries, reaching over 1,200 children aged 8–14 through in-person and online events. These have included performances, hands-on workshops, nature immersion, and global youth exchange – all co-designed with children. The results are clear: participants feel more connected, confident, and hopeful about the future. Teachers, parents, and partners consistently tell us these events are unique in their impact.

To build on this success, we propose a three-part strategy:

Infrastructure – Develop a core team and train regional facilitators to deliver YESfest events and year-round follow-up activities.

Programming – Create a replicable toolkit that includes curriculum-aligned resources, creative workshops, and outdoor activities for schools and community groups.

Platform – Build a digital space for children to share projects, connect globally, and access ongoing inspiration and support.

Funding will enable us to grow from a volunteer-led project into a sustainable, youth-powered movement. It will support delivery of seven YESfest events in 2025/26 and beyond (including New York, London, Bali, Lancashire Cornwall), co-create youth leadership pathways, and deepen impact through local partnerships and global storytelling.

By acting now, we can support a generation of young changemakers who not only care deeply about the planet – but feel capable, connected, and ready to lead. This is the solution: joyful, inclusive, and led by children.

### **Part C - Wider Support**

**A key part of the value of being shortlisted for, or winning, an award is the network of partners that becomes available to help you. With that in mind, how would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)**

Being shortlisted for or winning the Stephen Lloyd Award would offer YESfest far more than funding – it would provide access to a powerful network of mentors, legal and business experts, funders, and social impact leaders who could help us build the strong foundation this movement needs to thrive.

As a young CIC with global ambitions, we are rich in vision and creativity, but lean on operational capacity. We need support to strengthen our governance, develop a sustainable business model, and formalise partnerships with schools, funders, and international collaborators. The Stephen Lloyd network's legal expertise in structuring social ventures, alongside access to strategic advice, would be transformational.

We are also looking to grow a Board of Advisors with diverse experience across education, environmental justice, youth leadership, mental health, and the arts. The network's introductions could help us connect with aligned individuals who share our belief in the power of young people and joyful action.

We're at a critical growth point – with rising demand, multiple international events planned for 2025, and exciting partnerships forming across the UK, USA, and Indonesia. With the right support, we can evolve from a passionate start-up to a globally recognised model of youth-powered climate action.

The Stephen Lloyd Award is not just an opportunity for YESfest – it's an investment in a generation of

children who are ready to reimagine the future. With this network behind us, we can give them the tools, platform, and belief they need to lead

#### **Part D - Financial Justification**

**How do you propose to spend the winning funds of £25,000 (50 words max). Please provide a general idea.**

35% to build a core central team for research  
25% research and development to develop sustainable, scalable programming, impact data and youth representation  
25% Bursaries to widen participation to underserved communities in the UK and Global South  
15% Marketing, asset building and partnerships

#### **Part E - Supporting Information**

**Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)**

Core founders -  
Alex Bell (former headteacher/ serial social entrepreneur (<https://linktr.ee/AlexBell>)  
Headteachers Jim Dees (<https://www.westlodge.harrow.sch.uk/>), Rachel Tomlinson (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachel-tomlinson-frsa>)  
Community Farmers Gill & Andy Taylor (<https://harwesfarm.org>)  
Charlotte May Tomlinson - University of St Andrew's graduate, Early Career Teacher, Barrowford School

Alex was Jim's leadership coach  
Jim commissioned Alex for a youth eco summit in Harrow.  
Alex had global connections/ ambitions.  
Rachel and Alex were already connected via OppiGlobal.com.  
Gill and Andy already collaborated and introduced to Rachel & Alex locally.  
Rachel and Charlotte May are mother and daughter

#### **YouTube Video, if you'd like to add one**

YESfest Pendle 2024 film - Finalist at the Smiley Charity Film Awards 2025:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upcw7cgoGJk>

Global music video 2025 - made for £1,500: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skno-nqCgzE>