

Learning to stonewall at Hazel Brow Farm
© Hermione Pocock

Case Study
Up Skill, Down Dale graduate

Insight from one of the first cohort of young people to participate in the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities, Up Skill, Down Dale programme.



Sufi, Jacob and Emily (left to right) planting vegetables © Sally Robertshaw

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities, Up Skill, Down Dale programme provides a strong platform upon which to build the skills and experience to launch a career in the environment, learning and engagement sector.

A former Up Skill, Down Dale graduate tells us more…

How it began…

It was by word of mouth because I was looking for opportunities to work in the green sector and I was keen to understand whether I needed academic qualifications or if training and apprenticeships were available and which offered the best way to develop a career in this sector.

After completing a Workers Educational Association (WEA) course in volunteering, I had been doing voluntary work for Bradford Environmental Education Service (BEES) and I wanted to build on the experience I had gained there. I really enjoyed the work at BEES, so I decided I wanted to pursue a career in the green sector.

I was attracted by the training element that would provide me with knowledge of what was needed to be able to go down that route if I actually had an interest in doing that long term.

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/learning-and-engagement

Left
Drystone walling © Caroline Hall

Right
Malham Cove © Colin Chick





"I began to understand what kind of opportunities are out there and how I could shape a career path…"

X14
sessions / days in the Dales

5
cohorts over 5 years

70
young people engaged in the programme

4,600
hours of volunteering over 5 years

"I've never felt out of place because of lack of experience or knowledge and working in such a positive setting has allowed me to grow…"

The outcomes and benefits

- The scheme made me more aware of the range of opportunities that exist and how to set about getting a job in the green sector. A lot of this was down to simply networking with other young people with similar aspirations and it has led on to so many more opportunities.
- A placement at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority within the Learning & Engagement team, provided a really useful insight into learning and engagement in the outdoors.
- I was supported by my colleagues and developed a lot of new skills in terms of engagement and delivery, but I realised I also needed more academic qualifications
- I enrolled on a Level 3 Course in Wildlife and Countryside Management at College.
- I took part in the Youth Voice residential conference in 2022. This led to supporting a residential visit at the North York Moors.
- Getting experience provided a real boost to my confidence, skills and knowledge.
- Developing my practical skills to a level where I could co-lead the learning and engagement activities.
- Time spent on the placement counted towards the vocational requirements of my college course.



Abdulrahim in the hay meadows
© Sophie Balderson

Up Skill, Down Dale is a programme for people aged 18 to 29 who want to learn new skills to help develop a career in the green sector. Every April, participants join a year-long supported programme to explore a suite of exclusive volunteering and training opportunities with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA). Through a series of monthly sessions, the Up Skill, Down Dale (USDD) programme aims to provide the skills to become a green leader and support routes to employment.

Participants are supported by a specialist mentor and can benefit from expert tutorship from other specialist YDNPA staff across a range of disciplines. There are also opportunities to undertake volunteer placement with the various teams such as Farming Conservation, Learning and Engagement, Trees and Woodlands, Wildlife and Conservation or the Rangers.

Find out more **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/up-skill-down-dale-youth-volunteering**