

Daniella Faakor Dampthey

Age: 18
Location: Angus, Scotland



Image: Rural Youth Project

Main Challenges



Transport



Limited access to youth organisations and groups



Limited access to city centre

Rural Youth Project Involvement

Daniella is new to the Rural Youth Project in 2020.

She is looking forward to finding out more about the project and networking with other young people.

“One of my favourite hashtags of Instagram is ‘the voice of young people matters’

- Daniella Faakor Dampthey

Background

Originally from Ghana, Daniella Dampthey moved to Scotland when she was 12 years-old and has since developed a burning passion to support young people in rural areas.

Currently the Member of Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) for Angus, Daniella is using her seat voice in parliament to help combat challenges that she faced when living in rural Angus.

“I was a city girl to start with and when we moved to Scotland we lived in Glasgow for four years. I loved the accessibility and how everything was so quick. Although I didn’t grow up around rurality to start with, we then decided to move to Angus, where we lived for a total of two years.”

After moving to Angus, Daniella found transport issues and accessibility to youth groups a key issue. For example, if she missed the school bus, and her parents were at work or didn’t have access to a car, she would not be able to attend school.

“The problems young people face living in a rural area are not defined by how long they are there, as you very quickly begin to identify with them.

“I found it was very difficult to meet people, as there were few youth groups in our area of Montieth. We ended up actually leaving rural Angus because we just couldn’t do it,” added Daniella.

Despite moving back to the city, Daniella still wanted to attend the same school in rural Angus which resulted in a two-hour return trip to attend school each day.

“Our rural area was known to be affluent. There are hundreds of kids who perhaps live in the city and attend a rural school because their parents feel it will provide them with an advantage in life.



Image: Rural Youth Project

“It’s about engaging people and putting their voice forward. I do think it’s important to see young people as system changers and people who can make an impact.”

- Daniella Faakor Dampthey

Background

The community aspect was another benefit of living rurally for Daniella, who recalls singing carols one Christmas with her teachers and pupils within the community.

“Rural communities definitely have a better sense of togetherness and look out for one another, which is something I really love.”

Now currently living in Glasgow as a musical theatre student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Daniella is still in touch with her rural Angus and is using her role on as and MSYP on the Quality and Diversity Committee, to drive change.

“I became involved in the Scottish Youth Parliament through my volunteering work with Young Scot, and was elected in 2019 whilst I was beginning my 6th year at school. This gave me the opportunity to really carry the voice of the youth forward.”

Daniella understands why young people may feel they don’t have an input. She has recently been in touch with her local councillor to discuss at a local level, what can be done with regards to more frequent buses, organising youth trips, and opening youth spaces/groups in rural Angus.

Daniella is also passionate about sharing her experience, and those within the BAME community, to highlight the problem of racism and the work that is needed to be done to move towards a positive and inclusive society.

“I can’t imagine what it’s like growing up in a rural area by yourself as a black person. Although there were very few black children at my school, I always felt admired and encouraged and reflect on living in a rural area positively.”

Nevertheless, Daniella feels that current school curriculums do not prepare young people for how the world may see and judge you. Her next focus is speaking with councillors about what can be done on the issue of racial discrimination.

“I think that there is so much work to be done, in terms of in Scotland and rural areas and making people of other communities feel welcome. This is a conversation that needs to be happening in schools among young people.”

Solutions

1. Make the most of school opportunities to be able to attend further afield events, such as university open days.
2. Use your voice and speak to those in your local authority.

Daniella’s three top tips for anyone looking to have their voice heard, influence policy and help make rural communities better are:

1. Speak to your local councillor:

They are here to work for you, and you are there to hold them accountable.

2. Speak to MSYP:

You can get in touch via Twitter, Instagram or <https://syp.org.uk/members/find-your-msyp/>

3. Embrace social media:

Don’t be afraid of saying, I changed my mind or my position on a topic. You grow and evolve as a person, so voice what really matters to you.



We’re social!

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