

Back The Future: Our impact

Perspectives of the Back The Future Ambassadors

March 2026



Overview

The purpose of Back The Future is to **bring together, upskill, articulate and amplify diverse youth voices** to influence policy around a **just transition in food and farming**. The project ran between January and December 2025.

In December 2025, SOS UK interviewed the five Ambassadors (young farmers, students and youth food justice advocates) of Back The Future to understand the impact of the project, and gather their feedback.

This report details the themes that emerged from the discussions, including how the project effectively **amplified youth voices in food and farming, and upskilled young people to advocate and engage with democracy**. It also shares **learnings** from the project.

Amplifying youth voices and their credibility in food and farming

Ambassadors noted that Back The Future **fills a critical gap created by the exclusion of youth voices in food and farming.** They emphasised the importance of ensuring that their engagement is meaningful and not tokenistic.

The ambassadors also highlighted that Back The Future **enhances their credibility in food and farming spaces,** strengthening their ability to amplify youth perspectives. This increased legitimacy helps them access key people, organisations and policy spaces more effectively.



Addressing the exclusion of youth voices

“It’s [Back The Future] something we really need in the UK at the moment, a platform for young people to be able to learn skills and be more confident.”

“We want to have that policy ask of young people not being excluded from these spaces, not being tokenised... and their voices listened to as we are the heirs to the food system.”

“Young people are basically excluded from policy spaces currently, and not meaningfully engaged in policies related to food and farming. I think this can translate into many other issues... if young people are not part of the conversation.”



Panel Future Food System Leaders panel

Panelists:

Destiny McCatty, Biteback (England)

Anna Wylie, Back the Future (Scotland)

Jess Radnor, Back the Future (England)

Fayeth Jones, Food Foundation (Wales)

Moderator:

Myrtle Gregory, Eating Better



Strengthening credibility in food and farming spaces

“It’s given me a platform and credibility as an ambassador to reach out to different organisations and people.”

“Back the Future has given my voice credibility, and people listen to me more. That’s the whole point of the [UK Youth Food and Farming] Forum, to allow young people to have credibility in these policy spaces. I feel like I couldn’t access the policy spaces before, now I feel like that door is opened.”

“Back The Future solidified my belief that we can have a voice... Youth should have a voice within the whole system.”

Upskilling young people to advocate and engage with democracy

Ambassadors reflected that being part of Back The Future equipped them with the skills to navigate **decision-making involving stakeholders with differing priorities**. While they found this challenging at times, they recognised it as an essential skill for further action in food, farming and policy.

They highlighted that Back The Future enabled them to **expand their professional networks**, connecting with individuals and organisations they would not otherwise have had the confidence or access to.

Most ambassadors shared that they previously found public speaking challenging. Through opportunities provided by the project, such as speaking on panels, they were able to **build confidence and strengthen their public speaking skills**.



Navigating stakeholders with differing priorities

“It was bringing together diverse voices... ambassador’s perspectives, but also the partner’s perspectives. There’s so many different people in a room, coming from different angles, that I would say that **sometimes that’s been challenging... but in a good way**, because I think it’s good to expose yourself to other ways of thinking.”

“We knew that there was going to be a group of us with different opinions, and the **aim wasn’t for us to all live on exactly the same page... we had a lot of learnings from that as well.**”

“The project has taught me, or at least it definitely **reminded me, how diverse perspectives are**, even within people who do really care about food and farming. We don’t have to agree, but it’s definitely important for each other to learn each other’s perspectives.”

“I had the chance.. to **engage with people that you might not see eye to eye with**, which is so important [to have] the confidence to have those conversations, and being confident in your own thinking.”

“Having discussions with people who have different views and trying to find common ground is **the work we need to do for a better world.**”





Building young people's professional networks

“It’s [Back The Future] definitely **opened the door for me for the policy space**, [such as] the connections with Sustain, [The] Nature Friendly Farming Network, even SOS UK.”

“I probably would have felt a bit more intimidated to send an e-mail to an organisation.. or a person. I feel like **I would never have linked up with these organisations if it wasn’t for Back The Future.**”

“Back The Future allowed me to get **a foot into the policy space**, and I feel like I wouldn’t have had that in any other way.”

“Back The Future given me a platform and credibility as an ambassador to reach out to different organisations and people. I would have never linked up with these organisations if it wasn’t for Back The Future. **I’ve gained a network of partners that are really useful.**”

Greater confidence in public speaking

“One of the things I learned is as a young person, it’s okay to speak up and your contributions are valued. There are spaces [where] you go out and you... want to shrink. **Back The Future has made me confident... about how to speak and how to negotiate.**”

“The project has **given me the confidence to step up and say I can develop and use what I’ve learned.** [It’s] given me the energy to keep connecting with more and more young people in food and farming.”

“I think confidence is a big one. I’d not talked on panels before... so **I had the chance to talk on panels through Back The Future, which has been incredible.**”

“I’ve definitely grown from a confidence perspective. I would have said before the project, that was my weakest point, **I felt really nervous to speak publicly... whereas through this project, I’ve definitely gained that confidence.**”



Project learnings

Ambassadors said that they would have liked **greater direct engagement with policymakers and politicians**, particularly to better understand how to communicate and negotiate effectively with them.

They also highlighted challenges related to **time constraints**, and a preference for **more in-person opportunities** with other ambassadors.

“I know that it was difficult because everybody was from very different parts of the UK, but perhaps **an additional meet up** would have been quite nice.”

“I think the **main difficulty was time management**... it’s just been a lot more work than I anticipated.”

“I feel like since the whole point of the project is around policy influence and policy change... we actually haven’t had **direct communication with policymakers**.”

“I know it’s hard with timing and with resources and so on, but potentially **another in-person day**.”

“I think a bit more **training on speaking with politicians**, like what’s the best way to write to your MP?”