



Youth at Risk's Track Record 1992 to 2009

Introduction

"Youth at Risk sets out to show young people that they are worth something; that in one way or another they are capable of achievement that deserves and earns the respect of others. This discovery by youths who have never felt that they were valued by anyone literally changes their lives. It gives them self-respect. Those who do not respect themselves have no respect for others. They are at risk, and so are those around them. Youth at Risk is an inspiration to them and has been an inspiration to me. That is why I have been delighted to join their Advisory Board"

Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

Youth at Risk has been delivering transformational programmes for young people and the professionals who support them within communities, schools, prisons, long term unemployment programmes and local authorities for 18 years. Our track record is one of being powerfully innovative, enabling change to occur for individuals, groups and communities and, most importantly, one of delivering successful programmes that have demonstrable impact.

The growth in our beneficiaries

From Youth at Risk's first programme in 1992 to the end of our most recent financial year (June 2009) we had worked with in excess of **10,000** young people and **10,250** adults.

In that first year we ran just one programme involving 30 young people and 100 adults. Last year (July 2008-June 2009) saw us deliver 31 programmes, which enabled us to work with **1,257** young people, **307** volunteers and **1,047** professionals.

Next year we are targeted to work with **2,300** young people, an increase of over **80%** and **2,200** adults, an uplift of over **60%**.

Where we have worked

Greater London: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Edgware, Enfield, Haringey, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Wandsworth.

North West: Greater Manchester, Knowsley, Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Sefton.

North East: Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

Yorkshire & Humber: Doncaster, Leeds, Sheffield.

West Midlands: Birmingham, Brinsford, Burton-on-Trent, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire

East Midlands: Grantham, Leicester, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham

East: Basildon, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Clacton-on-Sea, Chelmsford, Colchester, Luton, Southend-on-Sea, Watford, Thurrock

South East: Farnborough, Medway, Portland, Portsmouth, Slough, Southampton.

South West: Bournemouth, Bristol.

Wales: Flintshire

Scotland: Isle of Skye, Polmont.

Northern Ireland: Belfast.

A selection of clients and programmes

Local authorities have traditionally formed a high proportion of our clients and still do. However, we continue to expand our work with other bodies delivering services to young people, both directly and as delivery partners.

We have delivered over **40** of our flagship **'Coaching for Communities'** programmes for **22** clients, in addition to which over the past 5 years we have created **13** bespoke community programmes for local authority clients. **'Motivate the Estate'** is a current such project. A three year programme focused on transforming the Woodgrange Drive Estate in Southend-on-Sea, one of the most deprived estates in the country.

This programme provided us with the model for our successful application to the Department for Children, Schools & Families Youth Sector Development Fund to run a series of major **'Community Transformation Programmes'** across the country.

These are now underway in Manchester, Sandwell, Croydon, Thurrock, Southend, Central Bedfordshire, Sunderland, Salford and Warwickshire.

2009 saw Youth at Risk return to Belfast as a delivery partner to FARSET, an organisation that evolved from local communities in east and west Belfast during 'The Troubles' and now offers a range of social initiatives in the areas of youth health, training, employment and conflict resolution. **'RESPECT'** is a major 3-year programme of training and community activity aimed at the economic and social regeneration of the Shankill area.

Our nationally acclaimed programme **'Ballet Hoo!'** gave birth to another new model, that of our **'5 Star Experiences'**. These combine our personal development training and performance coaching with the opportunity for young people to try and test their new skills through a discipline – be it the arts, sport, or business enterprise.

Rising to these challenges leaves young people with a legacy of enhanced self-esteem and the self-confidence to take on the challenge of achieving their newly established life goals.

A current example is **'Field of Dreams'**, in which we are working with Saracens Rugby Football Club to offer young people in Luton transformational opportunities involving a no-nonsense regime of coaching in rugby football and fitness training..

Since our **Education Programmes** started in 1999, we have worked with over **60** schools and colleges, and have secured 3 major Department for Children Schools & Families contracts to deliver this type of work.

The DCSF's **'London Challenge'** was targeted at key under-performing schools in the London area and set out not only to improve academic achievement by creating a new relationship between pupils and the educational process but also to support a culture change through enhancing relationships between pupils and staff. During the academic years 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007/8 we worked with **754** pupils, **154** staff and trained **273** volunteer performance coaches.

Achieving 'basic' outcomes: raising social, emotional and resilience skills

We believe that holistically developing young peoples' social, emotional and resilience skills will impact on other outcomes highlighted within current social policy agendas, such as educational achievement, sustained employment, pro-social relationship building and behaviour.

Often the development of skills such as increased self esteem, raised aspirations, greater control over actions, the ability to handle negative experiences, having a committed family adult, having a committed adult outside the family, resisting involvement in anti-social networks, are seen as 'soft outcomes' within many programmes.

We see them as our key 'basic' programme outcomes - essential to tackling issues at their root cause.

Dartington Social Research Unit's evaluation of our communities programme in Coventry clearly found that:

".... improvements occurred largely in areas specifically targeted, notably social and anti-social behaviour, family and social relationships, and physical and psychological health (including drug and alcohol misuse). There was also an indication.... that improvements were related to dose, that is the more training received by the child the better the outcome"

Our programmes change self perception and steer decisions and actions in a way that helps young people to take responsibility for themselves and their future.

IPSOS/MORI has highlighted our Ballet Hoo! programme as:

"an example of good practice in developing 'adult to adult' relationships with young people - to encourage them to develop positive attitudes, giving them the power to make decisions and judgements and enabling them to undertake constructive goal setting".

Achieving 'ultimate' outcomes

As part of our programme development, we agree with our clients what the ultimate outcomes for young people, adults and communities will be. We have outlined examples of how our programmes have achieved these.

Improving Educational Achievement.....

In Ballet Hoo! over 150 disaffected young people from across Birmingham and the Black Country re-engaged with their potential and their goals to achieve a number of impressive outcomes, including:

- **70%** of young people completed the life goals they set at the beginning of the project;
- **48** young people engaged with a BTEC qualification in performing arts.

- **38** gained certificate and **10** diploma level, which, for some, was the first and only qualification they had achieved;
- Sandwell recruited the most disadvantaged cohort of young people. Of their cohort **68%** are now involved in full-time education.

Our work on London Challenge and the 14 to 19 reform agenda demonstrates our ability to engage with young people to make more of the educational opportunities presented to them, raising their attainment and engagement with educational provision. Over the three years of the London Challenge programme:

- **59%** of pupils' expected grades improved since participating in the programme;
- **66%** of pupils' behaviour/attitude improved since participating in the programme;
- **50%** of pupils' attendance/punctuality improved since participating in the programme;
- **65%** of pupils' relationships with teachers improved since participating in the programme.

Enhancing Employability.....

Our work on Merseyside shows how our employment programmes engender a new approach to work amongst those with a history of long-term unemployment, so breaking self-defeating cycles.

We have worked with both **Knowsley** Borough Council and **Liverpool** City Council to attract more young people into employment and business and enable them to learn how to maintain employment through developing themselves and their approach to working life.

In Liverpool this has included a particular focus on providing a transition route from education to employment for disabled young adults and attracting people from Asian, Yemeni and Somali communities to occupational areas where they are under-represented.

From a random sample of young people and adults on a 2007/8 employment programme in Liverpool, **81%** of participants assessed themselves as improving in seeing new possibilities and opportunities, **71%** improved in self confidence, accepting support, and learning new skills.

Addressing Youth Crime and Justice.....

Evaluating our **'Enterprise Gateway Partnership'**, Lancaster University's Applied Social Science Unit for Research highlighted that:

"Youth at Risk has, "considerable experience... at motivating and engaging the most difficult to reach young people."

The report found that, through the training, young men showed subtle changes in their behaviour and attitudes, including being:

- more confident and having increased self esteem;
- able to concentrate for longer periods; able to maintain greater focus and engagement during 1:1 tasks and discussions; less distracted by other things going on; more able to control themselves in the face of peer distraction;
- able to maintain boundaries for increasingly longer periods;
- able to consider 'life goals' for the first time;
- able to show increased motivation and willingness to try something new to generate new ways of behaving;
- able to ask for help;
- more positive about group and team work and independent working;
- able to utilise space for movement to process information; able to use increased practical participation; able to express emotions through body movement.

Furthermore, through the mentoring, breakthroughs for the young men included:

- keeping on the straight and narrow;

- applying to access further education;
- talking over family issues in search of resolution;
- working back in family business;
- wanting to return to live with mum and dad;
- attending all appointments

'Wrosne', a programme based on the Wrens Nest and Priory estates in Dudley, was targeted at increasing community cohesion and impacting on some of the most alienated young people within those communities.

From the outset of the project police reported a significant drop in criminal activity on the Wrens Nest Estate. In the year prior to the programme commencing the reported figures were in excess of 100 offences per month and rising. These dropped to 60 – 80 per month. Local police expressed the view that the project was a significant reason why there had been such a dramatic drop.

Tackling Prejudice and Conflict.....

Our work in Northern Ireland, Kosovo and with the Windsor Fellowship demonstrates our ability to work cross culturally and with groups who are politically, culturally and religiously divided to create a commitment to working and living together.

Our **'Kosovo Conflict Resolution Programme'** worked with representatives from the Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian communities at both community and political levels.

As a result of the programme the two factions *worked together* on pilot projects to create community cohesion. An article in the New York Times reported:

An independent evaluation of our **'West Belfast Communities Project'** by Oxford University concluded:

"The West Belfast Youth at Risk pilot programme has demonstrated that it is possible for even the most alienated and disaffected young people to radically

change the direction of their lives and begin to make a positive contribution to their community. The young people who participated in the programme were believed to be beyond help. Intervention by statutory agencies and the local community had made no impact on their anti-social behaviour prior to the Youth at Risk programme.”

Engaging Communities & Professionals.....

Youth at Risk has learnt over its 18-year history that change processes must involve the support structures around a young person in order to create sustainable change and to enable young people and their communities to develop together.

Our work with communities, such as in **Bournemouth, Coventry and Knowsley** shows our ability to regenerate communities economic and educational prospects in a sustainable manner.

Our work with professionals within **Southend** shows our ability to transform working practices across Children's and Young Peoples' Services in a holistic manner, such that professionals have new insights into supporting their young people and developing creative and constructive relationships.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (a unitary authority) was the first Local Authority to commit to providing a change programme for every member of a service. We have trained over 125 members of staff of Specialist Children's Services, including the Head of Service.

In a Joint Area Review, nearly all staff the inspectors met spoke about the training and the benefits they had gained both personally and for the service. The inspectors commented upon the very positive impact, and how it appeared to have helped in establishing a positive culture and way forward.

During 2007/2008, we were commissioned by **Northern Ireland's Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team** to enhance the skills of youth professionals tackling drug and alcohol problems from across the area.

Following our programme, **all** staff said they could see new ways to provide deeper support for young people they work with, new ways to achieve breakthroughs with young people, felt confident at coaching effectively and were able to support young people through mistakes.

96% felt more confident in holding young people to account and **92%** felt more confident in communicating in challenging situations.

The external evaluation of our Enterprise Gateway Partnership found that the programme also brought about positive change in the prison officers, staff, educationalists, programme partners and mentors participating in the programme, through:

- improved understanding about supporting young people and ways of doing so;
- analysing training styles and the challenges of planning and implementing a new training programme in a prison; and
- an appreciation of the importance of team work.

Need More Information?

For more information about Youth at Risk's approach and impact please visit www.youthatrisk.org.uk or e-mail Jon Down on jon@youthatrisk.org.uk