

## Youth at Risk: Impact in Schools 1999-2011

*"Transformation is a word used too readily in my opinion, the true ability to transform people in a short period of time happens rarely from my personal experience. I feel extremely privileged to have been part of a group that witnessed this occur in the space of six days. It happened slowly sometimes without participants realising what was actually happening within them, but it clearly occurred to all around."* Nathan Hunnisett, Director of Inclusion, Ormiston Park Academy, Thurrock

### Youth at Risk in Schools:

Youth at Risk first began working in schools in 1999 at the recommendation of Lord Puttnam who had seen the results of their proven transformational methodology on hard to reach young people in the community. The Coaching for Success programme, initially funded by the Sainsbury's Trust, was designed, developed and piloted in three schools working with pupils not currently fulfilling their educational potential. The successful outcomes of this programme came to the attention of the Department for Education who funded Youth at Risk to deliver a two-year Enterprise Pathfinder based on the Coaching for Success model in 24 schools across the UK in 2002. This led to Youth at Risk being included as part of the London Challenge initiative to support the capital's underperforming schools to break the cycle between disadvantage and underachievement. Youth at Risk worked in 24 London schools for three years as part of this initiative and has since delivered to 60 school cohorts as part of the DfE National Challenge programme.

### Design of the Coaching for Success programme:

'Coaching for Success' has been designed to improve both academic and non-academic achievement of 14 -16 year olds. The training methodology works by posing a series of questions, the responses to which lead participants step-by-step to the realisation that what has happened in the past does not have to dictate the future, that they have the potential to make something of themselves and that they have it within their power to change. This process takes place in rigorously run intensive group workshops facilitated by our highly skilled trainers and is embedded through high quality one-to-one performance coaching and regular follow-up training. An intrinsic part of this programme is the 'outside-in' approach in which staff are trained in the transformational methodology before work begins with the pupils, this creates a ready-made support resource once young people begin their intensive programme.

### Programme structure:

- Staff and volunteers are trained in the transformational coaching methodology – 3 days
- Selected pupils attend an enrolment session and make a commitment to participate – ½ day
- Pupils attend intensive personal development workshop – 2-4 days
- Pupils attend follow-up trainings and receive one-to-one coaching from staff or volunteers for 6 months to achieve goals – 12 hours one-to-one coaching and 3-6 group follow-up days

### Impact:

754 pupils, 154 staff and 273 volunteers took part in our three-year London Challenge programme.

- 84% staff reported their training had significantly impacted their classroom practice
- 81% staff rated the results they accomplished through the programme as good or excellent
- 85% staff reported that the programme improved their day-to-day professional life
- 66% pupils improved their behaviour/attitude<sup>1</sup>
- 60% pupils improved their attainment levels/ predicted grades
- 50% pupils improved their attendance/punctuality
- 89% pupils reported improvement in their sense of responsibility towards education

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<sup>1</sup> Comparative impact data collected by schools before and after participation in Coaching for Success programme

### Programme outcomes:

- Pupils increase academic performance, improve behaviour and interpersonal skills.
- Culture change within the school increasing success, motivation and aspiration
- Staff develop new ways of engaging with pupils who are underachieving.

#### Katie – Coaching for Success participant

Katie attended the Youth at Risk Coaching for Success programme in the 2010-2011 academic year as a Year 10 pupil. She was selected for the programme because her focus on her learning had slipped - she was in danger of not achieving in her GCSEs, she also suffered from low levels of self esteem and confidence and had experienced some bullying throughout her school life. *"I was really losing interest in my education and didn't think it mattered because I wasn't going to go to university or anything, I just wanted to get a job."* Katie attended the Youth at Risk training and said that it really opened her eyes as to how complacent she had become over the years with all that had happened in her life and what she wanted to get out of it. *"I realised that I'd just accepted it all and not done anything about it - it had just got me down...I think I was getting depressed and had no ambition to do anything."*

She stated that the training had a profound effect on her: *"at first I didn't know what it was about, but then after the first day I remember going to bed thinking, this is really emotional stuff...and it kind of woke me up a bit."* After the training was complete she stated she felt like she could *'knock the world down I was on such a high'*. From this she has gone on to focus on her studies and is much more ambitious now saying that she intends to stay on at school and take her A levels. She is predicted to get all her GCSE's grades A-C. The follow up coaching kept her on track, she used the time to discuss any issues at home and to focus on her goals and ambitions. *"The coach really helped me stay motivated and work hard. It was someone I could talk to about things."* The training helped her overcome another ordeal in her life when she was mugged by a stranger. *"If that had happened to me before the training, it would have really affected me, but I was much better at coping with it as I knew I was strong enough to deal with it."* The course had clearly made a big difference to her self esteem and confidence and helped her focus much more effectively on her talents, ability and her future.

**Case Study provided through interview with external evaluators York Consulting.**

*"My personal training re-motivated me and inspired me to inspire my students, I learnt through the programme that everyone can make a real difference to themselves and others if they want to. The trainers from Youth at Risk are all inspirational people who genuinely care about what they do, I wish it could be available to a lot more, if not all students and staff at ABMR"*

**Richard Prendergast, teacher, Archbishop Michael Ramsay School, Southwark**

*"Pupils who found it hard to relate to staff or have mature conversations [with staff] now feel empowered to do so. All pupils appear more confident to speak out on their own or others' behalf. Personally I find it easier to deal with issues with the whole year group as I have better listening skills, take things less personally and with less preconceived ideas about where pupils are coming from. A great success."*

**Chris De Roeck, Head of Yr 10 - Greig City Academy, Haringey**

*"The Youth at Risk work here has been an unqualified success. The testimony of the students and their parents is evidence of this. Hard data, exclusions, behavioural incidents and attendance records confirm this. It is imperative that we are able to continue to offer Coaching for Success in the future."*

**Lesley Day, Principal, Harris Girls Academy East Dulwich**