



EXPLORE Leadership

3rd year report 2013 - 2014

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A review of the EXPLORE

Leadership Programme

2011 - 2014

December 2014

Joe Roughton – Projects' Manager

FOCUS Charity

73 Church Gate

Leicester, LE1 3AN

0116 251 0369

joe.rougton@focus-charity.co.uk

<http://www.focus-charity.co.uk>

Focus Charity: Who we are and what we do

FOCUS is a young people's charity that was first set up in 1988, and which has since helped to change the lives of over 16,000 young people and disabled people, with the support of over 4,500 volunteers and business managers.

Our Vision is of a society in which individuals feel inspired and empowered to have a positive impact on their communities.

We strive to achieve this through a range of volunteering community involvement and personal development projects for young people.

Overview of Explore Leadership Project

Explore Leadership Project is an exciting project delivered by Focus and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Explore Leadership Projects' specific aim is to engage and train young people aged 13 – 19 years of age, who would not necessarily be natural leaders, to develop the speaking and listening skills required and become leaders through an adventurous, challenging and inspiring residential training course and individual community project.

The residential course covers fundamental aspects of leadership including:

- Leadership styles, values and characteristics
- Communication and listening
- Problem solving
- Organisation skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Time Management
- Project development and management
- Recruiting your peers and team building
- Volunteering in the community and future aspirations

After the residential training course, young people will develop their own individual community project, recruiting a team of their peers and delivering an exciting project that will directly benefit their local community.

The final chapter of the project is for the young leaders and the Focus team to plan, prepare and deliver a celebration event to acknowledge and celebrate their

achievements.

The project is flexible and incorporates an informal and experiential approach to learning through a range of exciting and challenging activities and events.

There is also the opportunity for young leaders and the youth volunteer teams to access further volunteering opportunities with Focus through our Youth Action Team or to be linked to other voluntary organisations.

Summary of Explore Leadership outcomes 2011-2014



Young People's Outcomes

Outcomes (by June 2014)	Year 3 Outcomes (By June 2014)	Outputs and Activities
<p>At least 72 young people will improve their speaking and listening skills.</p> <p>ELP1: 12 Young People ELP2: 15 Young People ELP3: 12 Young People ELP4: 11 Young People ELP5: 18 Young People ELP6: 10 Young People</p> <p>TOTAL: 78 Young People - Target Achieved</p>	<p>At least 24 young people will improve their speaking and listening skills, including the ability to communicate effectively with their peers, to influence and motivate others, to give presentations to groups and to communicate with people outside their peer group.</p> <p>28 Young people reported an increase in the above outcome. Target Achieved</p>	<p>12 young people will attend a leadership skills residential project by October 2013.</p> <p>A further 12 young people will attend a leadership skills residential project by April 2014.</p> <p>24 young people will lead a team of their peers in the delivery of a community project by June 2014.</p> <p>24 young people will report an improvement in their speaking and listening skills by June 2014.</p>

Volunteer Outcomes

Outcomes (by June 2014)	Year 3 Outcomes (By June 2014)	Outputs and Activities
<p>At least 80% of 650 other young people will develop their skills and self-confidence through volunteering.</p> <p>Year 1: 174 Young People Year 2: 176 Young People Year 3: 195 Young People</p> <p>TOTAL: 545 young people - Target Achieved</p>	<p>At least 80% of 220 other young people (who will be peers of those recruited for the training element of the programme) will develop their team working, communication and task management skills and self-confidence through volunteering.</p> <p>195 young people reported an increase in the above outcome. Target Achieved</p>	<p>At least 110 young people will participate in a community project, led by their peers by February 2014</p> <p>At least 110 young people will participate in a community project, led by their peers by June 2014.</p> <p>At least 80% of 220 young people (176) will report an increase in their skills and self-confidence by June 2014.</p>

Community Outcomes

Outcomes (by June 2014)	Year 3 Outcomes (By June 2014)	Outputs and Activities
<p>At least 80% of 72 community groups will report a positive outcome as a result of projects delivered by young people.</p> <p>Target Achieved</p>	<p>At least 80% of 24 community groups will report an improvement in the well being of their service users, an improvement in their environment, or an increase in their public profile as a result of projects delivered by young people.</p> <p>Target Achieved</p>	At least 12 community groups will host a team of young people who will carry out a project for their benefit by February 2014.
		At least 12 community groups will host a team of young people who will carry out a project for their benefit by June 2014.
		At least 80% of 24 community groups will report a positive outcome from the project they host by June 2014.

Outcomes (by June 2014)	Year 3 Outcomes (By June 2014)	Outputs and Activities
<p>FOCUS will develop new practices for the delivery of youth-led community projects, including new working practices.</p> <p>We are developing several short booklets that encompass activities and learning from the EXPLORE programme. These are to be embedded on to our website and disseminated out to our partnered schools. These booklets have been developed with the input and support of our EXPLORE young leaders and peer mentors.</p>	<p>FOCUS will develop guidance for the delivery of youth-led community projects, including new working practices.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Guidance to be created by June 2014.
	<p>Disseminate practices to partnered schools and colleges whose students have taken part.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Guidance to be shared to lead mentors of partnered schools/colleges by August 2014.
	<p>Disseminate practices through local/national media, such as 'Young People Now' magazine, and through events and forums</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Develop press release and send to Young People Now, Citizen's Eye website, TES website and Voluntary Action Leicester by August 2014.

Volunteer Peer Mentor Outcomes

Outcomes (by June 2014)	Year 3 Outcomes (By June 2014)	Outputs and Activities
<p>At least 12 young people will be trained as peer mentors to assist in supporting the Explore young leaders throughout their community projects by June 2014.</p> <p>Target Achieved</p>	<p>At least 6 young people will be trained as peer mentors to assist in supporting the Explore young leaders throughout their community projects by June 2014.</p> <p>Target Achieved</p>	<p>We will train at least 3 young people to become peer mentors to support Explore young leaders through their community projects by February 2014.</p> <hr/> <p>We will train at least 3 young people to become peer mentors to support Explore young leaders through their community projects by June 2014.</p>

Year 3

Our Findings



Recruitment

We are now recruiting from a variety of schools, with the majority applying from:

- Crown Hills Community College, Leicester
- Gateway Community College, Leicester
- Queen Elizabeth's College, Leicester
- New College, Leicester

With the exception of Queen Elisabeth College, these schools each cater from young people from some of the most deprived communities of Leicester. Crown Hills serves the areas of Evington, Spinney Hills and Highfields; Gateway is situated in Hamilton; and New College is in the outer-city estate of New Parks, which is highlighted within the Leicester Child Poverty Strategy as an area of very high need.

We have been nurturing our relationships with these schools to ensure that each school can identify more young people who would benefit from this programme and so that we can widen our reach to enable more young people the opportunity to participate.

During recruitment for both groups 5 and group 6, we received over 50 new applications from young people aged between 13 - 19 years from all the above colleges. Of these, school mentors/pastoral care teams identified 20% of the applicants who went on to the programme. This was a fantastic result and enabled us to target any specific young people through this system.

In total we initially recruited 29 young people on to the programme over the course of two cohorts in the 3rd year. Unfortunately, one young person dropped out. This still exceeded our target and was able to take 28 young people on our training programme.

During the 5th cohort, we primarily recruited young people from Gateway Community College. Our rationale for this was to recruit young people who were preparing to leave college to move on to further training, university, apprenticeships or employment. We believe this experience have given these young people the opportunity to enhance their confidence and social skills prior to their transition from school to further education and adult employment. Please see the interim report for more information on this cohort of EXPLORE leaders.

Our 6th cohort focused on our new link with New College and utilising our links with Crown Hills. This gave us the opportunity to bring together groups of young people who wouldn't necessarily come together under normal circumstances.

This was a fantastic opportunity that enabled young people from two different wards of Leicester to gain a greater understanding of their cultures and communities as well as establish new friendships.

Funding

During the 3-year period covered by this report the Explore Leadership Project was funded by the following:

- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Lloyds Bank Foundation (formerly Lloyds TSB Foundation)
- Michael Bishop Foundation
- IBM
- Trusthouse Charitable Foundation
- Next PLC
- Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All

The following organisations have committed funding for the project in 2014/15 and beyond:

- Henry Smith Foundation
- Michael Bishop Foundation
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Maud Elkington Foundation

We have also submitted application to a number of other trusts, foundations and corporate supporters.

Residential programme feedback for Explore Group 6

For this cohort of the project we decided to change the evaluation questions we asked of the young people. The reasons behind this change are detailed in the next section of this report. A key difference is in the scoring we attributed to each question; the young people were asked to rate their level of confidence on a scale of 1 – 5, as follows:

- 1 I am not confident in any situation.
- 2 I can sometimes show a little confidence in familiar situations.
- 3 Sometimes I am confident in some different situations.
- 4 I'm usually confident in many situations, including formal situations.
- 5 I'm confident in all situations even those that are new to me.

At the end of the residential training for our 6th group, we asked young people to evaluate their experience and skills up to that point.

We received extremely positive feedback from all of the participants with regards to the residential training.

Leadership

40% rated themselves 5 and 60% rated themselves 4. It was clear from the feedback that young people felt they had learnt to use their leadership knowledge to progress with the programme.

Speaking

30% rated themselves 5, 60% rated themselves 4 and 10% rated themselves 3. Young people felt they were able to express their views clearly, including giving clear instructions and giving presentations.

Listening

80% of participants felt they had vastly improved their listening skills, with 20% feeling they had moderately improved.

Teamwork

90% reported back an increase in teamwork, including the sharing of tasks and responsibilities.

Problem Solving

70% of the participants rated themselves 4 and 30% rated 5. This shown that

young people felt more confident in dealing with conflict and overcoming personal challenges.

Time Management

40% reported themselves 5, 50% reported themselves 4 and 10% reported back 3. Averagely spread across the top end of the scale, all felt they had improved their ability to be on time and actively manage the time they had during the residential.

Task Management

50% felt they were a 5 and 50% felt they were a 4. It was seen that throughout the week, our participants had really developed their ability to take on responsibilities, prioritise their project work and get things done on time.

Project Management

70% felt they were a 5 and 30% felt they were a 4.

There was a huge improvement in their ability to generate an idea and construct a project plan within a team environment. They were able to nominate a leader and develop roles for all to play. Their mock project was a huge success and verbal feedback from both participants and the public were positive and confidence boosting to the group.

100%

100% of the young people involved on residential reported back that **they wanted to be involved in more projects with FOCUS.**

100%

All young people felt they had **overcome some personal challenge** during the residential training programme.

100%

All young people felt **they learnt new skills and how they could apply them.**

90%

9 out of 10 young people said they **made new friends.**

100%

All young people reported back a **stronger belief in themselves.**

Feedback of start and end point questionnaires for Explore Group 6

Prior to running the 6th cohort of EXPLORE Leadership, we reviewed our start and end point questionnaires with previous EXPLORE Leaders. We found that our previous evaluation and assessment forms needed redeveloping to really capture young people's true assessment of their skills during their experience on EXPLORE Leadership.

All our previous assessment and evaluation forms have been based on a Richter scale of 1 to 10. 1 being not confident in any situation and 10 being confident in all situations. When young people completed these assessment forms, the guidance on this scale was explained by staff and gave young people a larger field in which to assess their skills. In previous assessments, some young people initially scored themselves highly on their starting point questionnaires and when they completed the programme understood that they weren't as confident as they thought, so the results seemed somewhat skewed in their end point questionnaires when they scored themselves at a lower point in the scale.

We addressed this by shortening the scale to 1 to 5 with a more defined explanation of what each number meant. This is what was established through consultation.

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | Not confident in any situation. |
| 7 | I can sometimes show a little confidence in familiar situations. |
| 8 | Sometimes I am confident in some different situations. |
| 9 | I'm usually confident in many situations, including formal situations. |
| 10 | I'm confident in all situations even those that are new to me. |

We also looked at what they were assessing themselves against and found that they really needed to focus on the following priorities in order to meet the project outcomes as well as their own personal growth:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| • Leadership | • Problem Solving |
| • Team work | • Time Management |
| • Speaking | • Task Management |
| • Listening | • Project Management |

As a result of redefining our start and end point questionnaires I was unable to include these results in to a combined statistic with the other 5 cohorts. In response to this, below is the results for group 6's participation on the EXPLORE Leadership programme.

Participants reported back a **45% increase** in their leadership skills. The projects that were developed and run with this cohort were fantastic. The young people had a good grasp of their projects, the direction in which they wanted to go and the

execution of their projects. A couple of projects to note was an arts-based project, developed by a 13 year old young leader as part of a larger open day called 'Leicester Day'. There was a huge response by the general public, all wanting to get involved in created some art pieces and talking with the young leader about the project and volunteering.

Another project to note was by a very quiet and timid young leader, who contacted their local RSPCA in Leicester to run a stall, with the proceeds going to the local sanctuary. This was a fantastic day and a very busy stall that saw them raffling teddy bears to the public and generating a modest sum of money to the charity. The young person responsible had organised the stall, recruited their peers and gave clear instructions on the day and throughout the project. I spoke to the young leader's mother who has said, "Abbie seems so much more confident in herself. FOCUS has really helped her to grow as a person and face more challenges at both home and at school".

Young people reported back an increase in their **speaking skills by 43%** and an increase in **listening skills by 14%**. This was particularly highlighted at their celebration event where several young people presented their project experience and what they learnt to a crowd of over 100 people. The feedback from the crowd was very positive, including one of our former trustees who said, "These young people spoke with a lot of confidence and enthusiasm about what they had done. I have colleagues in my company who still cannot present as well as what I have seen from these young people" Daniel Hyde.

There was a **22% increase in their teamwork skills** and a **24% increase in their problem solving skills**. It was exciting to see two very different schools come together to work as a team. Throughout the residential training friendships quickly formed between the two schools that lead to strengthening their teamwork and problem solving skills as they were faced with group challenges. The activities and discussions that took place during the residential training were always conducted in mixed groups of young people, each taking a lead or given some responsibility that stretched their skills and capabilities.

There was an **increase in time management by 34%** during the 6th cohort of EXPLORE Leaders. Throughout this programme, the training and meetings always had a schedule that kept on time and young people had responsibilities to ensure that the group met the time commitments of the programme. This has led to them being able to better self-manage their time.

Finally young people reported back a **42% increase in their project management** and a **41% increase in their task management skills**. As I had identified earlier, the young people's projects during this cohort were well thought out and considered prior to the delivery. Each young leader had a good level of volunteers that they had recruited and the projects were manageable in the time they had.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring has become a very popular way for young people who have been involved in EXPLORE Leadership to continue to pass on their experiences and continue to volunteer with FOCUS.

To date we have recruited and trained over 12 young people to become peer mentors. This role has become an important responsibility at FOCUS, beyond the EXPLORE programme and continued with our Youth Action Team.

In doing this, we have also acknowledged and begun redeveloping young people's volunteering roles at FOCUS, in order to develop a route of progression during their active involvement in FOCUS and its projects.

As this role continues to evolve at FOCUS, we will have to consider what roles young people play and that a system becomes available for young people to utilise this additional training, either through brokering on to other volunteering organisations or as a progressive route to an even bigger role in the organisation. This will, however, require additional funding to widen the approach.

A 3 Year Review of young people's development on the EXPLORE Leadership Programme



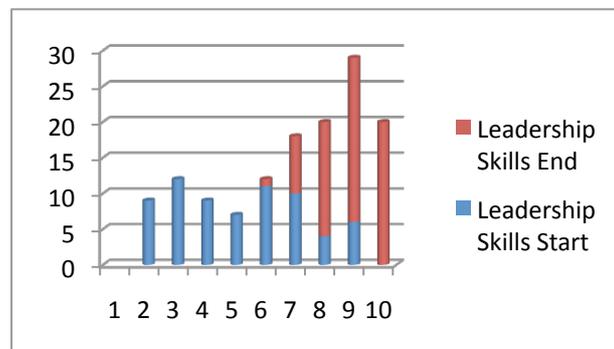
Young leaders development – A 3 year review of starting and end point questionnaires.

Over the last 3 years, we have run 6 Explore Leadership training programmes. In total, 78 young people have successfully completed the programme.

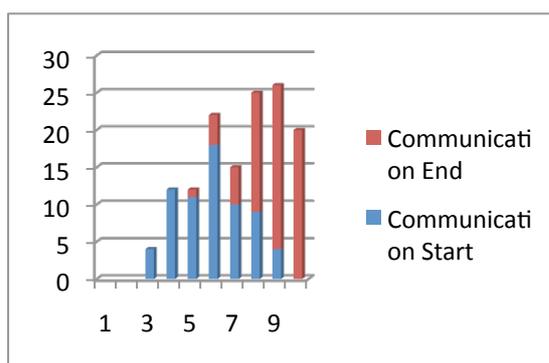
The structure of the start and end point assessments for young people were based on a Richter scale of 1 to 10. 1 being not confident in any situation and 10 being confident in all situations. We utilised this assessment for 5 Explore cohorts before we reassessed the questionnaire with young people. After much consultation with young people, we re-wrote the questionnaire that would enable young people to better understand and place judgement on their skills at that particular point in their development.

The following feedback is based on the first 5 cohorts of Explore leaders and the original start/end point questionnaires. There were 68 young people that participated on the programme over 5 cohorts.

According to our feedback, young people reported back an increase in their leadership skills by 72%. Listening to feedback from young people, it was apparent that the programme had prepared young people to lead themselves and a team of their own.

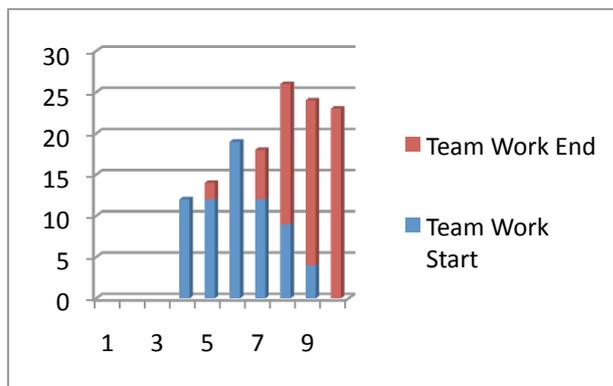


“I am confident in leading a team because I got extra experience on the residential and my project. This experience gave me more confidence as I since have lead a team in P.E.” Anon, aged 14 years.



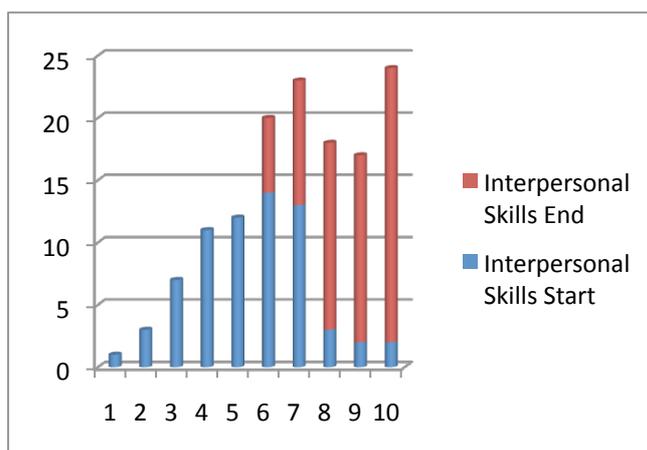
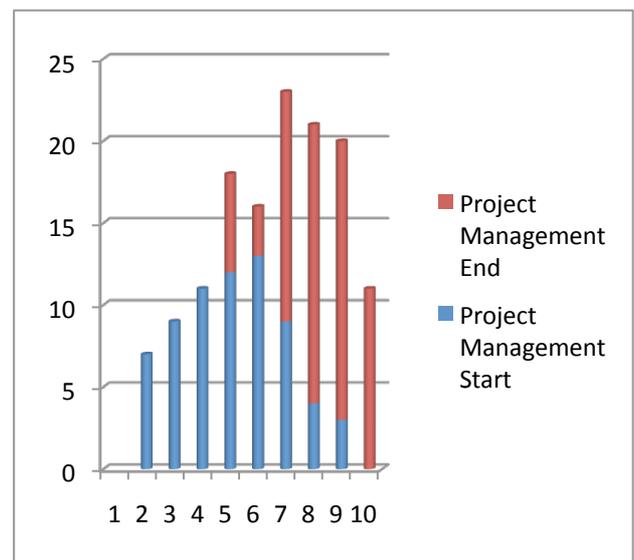
There was an increase in young people's ability to communicate by 47%. From attending some of the projects that young people delivered, it was apparent that their ability to give clear instructions and roles had increased, particularly with young

people that initially reported a low score in their start point questionnaires.



Young people reported back an increase in their team work skills by 44%. This was clear during the residential training programmes as the activities and learning format encouraged young people to work together to achieve a goal or to solve a problem. As a result, it was reported that young people increased their problem solving skills by 79%

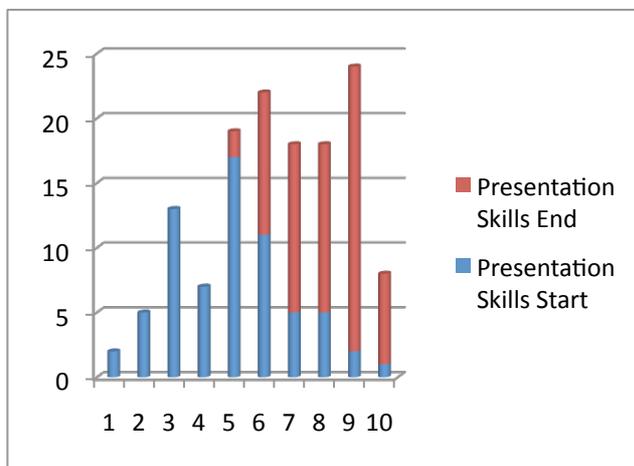
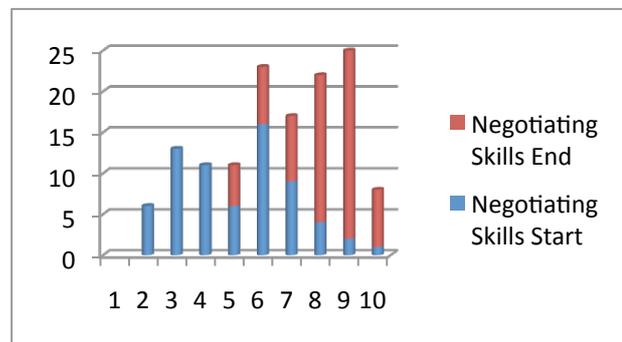
A principle skill that we endeavoured to teach was the ability to manage a project of their own. Every cohort during the residential training had an experience to create a project in under 24 hours before going to a local town to run the project. This was a mock project that enabled the groups to understand some basic elements to planning and running a project. This was a popular installation in to the project and proved to enhance young people's skills and experience before running their own projects. As a result of this and their own projects, young people reported back an increase in their project management skills by 58%



Young people's interpersonal skills saw an increase of 57% through the programme as well as a 53% increase in their ability to influence their peers, to take part as volunteers, on their community projects. This is reflected in the overall numbers of young people recruited by young leaders to be part

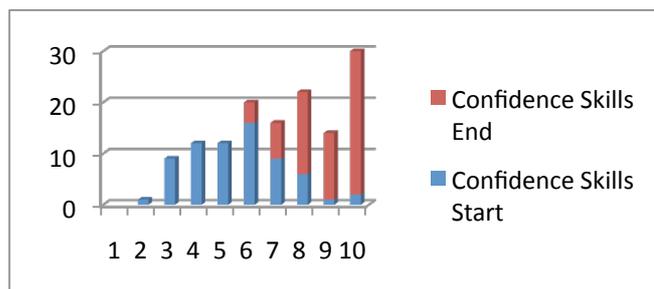
of their community projects through the duration of the programme.

According to the feedback, young people reported an increase in their negotiation skills by 58%. There were essential parts of the programme where young people needed to discuss, agree, bargain and settle elements of their project in order for it to be successful. Their increase in this skill shows they have actively engaged with and learnt ways to do this.



We asked young people about their presentation skills. It was reported back that there was an increase in this skill by 62%. After every cohort of young leaders had completed their projects, they were tasked with planning a celebration event to showcase their experiences. As part of this event, young people gave a presentation about their experience on the programme.

Finally, we asked young people about their levels of confidence prior to and after the Explore Leadership programme. Current feedback reports an increase in confidence by 60%.



Moving forward

It is clear to us that there is a very strong case for continuing to deliver the Explore Leadership Project beyond this initial 3 year period. This conclusion is borne out by two key pieces of data, firstly the high levels of interest we have received over the past 3 years from young people wishing to participate in it; and secondly, the positive feedback we have received about the impact of the project from both participants and the teachers who have referred them to us.

It is therefore our intention to continue to seek funding to deliver the project in its existing format and to further develop it based upon future evaluation and feedback. We view Explore Leadership as one of our core projects and central to our strategic plans for the next few years.

We are happy to report that a number of organisations have committed funds for the delivery of the project into 2015 and beyond, which will enable us to maintain a level of 24 Young Leaders per year in the medium term.

However, we are keen to expand the project to provide additional places through larger cohorts of young people or by offering additional cohorts during the year. This will only be possible by securing new funding, which we hope to achieve by developing additional applications to trusts and foundations and by further developing our relationships with corporate supporters.

We have also investigated the possibility for charging schools a fee for places on the project. We will only pursue this route if we are able to continue to ensure that a broad range of young people, and most especially those in need of additional support, are able to access the project.

If we do not achieve the level of funding that we require to deliver the project in its current format, we have developed a number of alternate delivery models. These include combining cohorts to achieve an economy of scale and providing the training element of the project in a non-residential setting. Whilst these would reduce the 'per head' cost of the project, they may impact on quality and the overall experience of the young people. In deciding whether to pursue these routes, we will consult with young people and the schools we have worked with.

Another area for further development that we aim to focus upon is the dissemination of our working practices. The booklets we have developed will be made more widely available to download and we will seek opportunities to work with other organisations to improve the opportunities open to young people to undertake youth-led volunteering projects.

“My most difficult moment was talking with a group of people as I was quiet and didn’t talk much. Because of the Explore Leadership project, I feel that I am capable of being a leader and working in a team.”

“I feel very confident in leading other people.”

“I am confident in leading a team because I got extra experience on the residential and my project. This experience gave me more confidence as I since have lead a team in P.E.”

“I still find it challenging to be a leader but EXPLORE has given me more confidence to step forward and keep trying.”

If you were to recommend the ELP to a friend, what would you say?

“It is a great experience if you want to become more confident and if you want to become a leader or just for an amazing experience for yourself.”

“It was amazing. I would do it again and again.”

“It was awesome.”

“Just go for it. It was fantastic and I loved it.”

“It is the best experience.”

“It is wicked, go right now.”

“It was fun and such a great experience. It also helps you learn more about yourself and why doing volunteering is important.”

“There’s loads to do and it’s so much fun and you also gain leadership skills, which looks great on your CV for the future.”

“It’s a fun-packed programme that will change your life.”



Joe Roughton – Projects' Manager

FOCUS Charity

73 Church Gate

Leicester, LE1 3AN

0116 251 0369

joe.rougton@focus-charity.co.uk

<http://www.focus-charity.co.uk>