

18th Forum on Youth Expeditions - notes

Date: 1st May 2013

Venue

Peter Symonds College
Owens Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO22 6RX
www.psc.ac.uk

“Inclusivity” - Issues, opportunities and ensuring expeditions remain open to all young people, whatever their background

Attending

James Dyer – British Exploring
Chris Blessington
H Tanner
Angus Wingfield (Africa Wild Trails)
Helen Littlejohn (Peter Symonds College)
James Moore (Travel Health Consultancy)
Adrian Ferraro (Specialist Travel Consultancy)
Will Hatton (Specialist Travel Consultancy)
Mike Blakey
Michael Sturman (Avocet House)
Robbie Kilgallon (Avocet House)
Claire Ellaway (WCE)
Antony Barton (Adv. Co.)
Hayley Meredith (DofE)
Roger Miller
Justin Monnington (Schools Ww)
Dave Coyle (Schools Ww)
Mike Cross
Graham Derrick
Ted Grey
Fee Bellamy (Outposts)
Jessie Woolway (Raleigh)
Brandon Charleston (Raleigh)
Shane Winser (RGS)
Clive Burgess (Dorset Expedition Society)
Rob Wallbank (Wilderness Expertise)
Michael Edney (YET Media)

Apologies

Bob Schroter
Michael Kingscote
Pat Milston
David Williams
Vivien Moore
Mark Salmon
Pete Allison
Steve Bull
Paul Cornish
Matt Lacey
Richard Oliver
Peter Pearson
Mike Rosser
Lesley Sleight
Roger Davis
Tony Land
Marcel Wagner
Justin Major
Ross Worthington
Beth Chapman
Kensa Cooper
Quincy Connell
Chris Short (FFE)

Opening, welcome and introduction to ‘inclusive’ expeditions

Graham Derrick (YET Chair) opened the day with a welcome and thanked Peter Symonds College for their kind offer of hosting the day. With the sad news of a British explorer dying in Greenland just the day before, he also reminded us that our field of work is not one without risk.

Chris Blessington (YET Trustee) – set the scene for the day:

The forum is for us to discuss and debate issues of interest to us. The word “inclusivity” is an awful one – but the topic is *really* important. A lot of people dabble on the edge. Some people do it well, some very well, others very badly. Chris talked about his own experiences in ‘wild’ South Africa and how his days in Umfolozi game reserve brought about an idea to bring young people into the wilderness and use the natural world as a classroom. Children are not defined by class, creed, colour, background, intelligence – and neither should we define them by these things. It is our role to ensure they have the opportunity to learn from the natural world, whatever their background.

Michael Edney (YET Media officer)

Michael introduced himself as the new YET Media officer. This was the first YET forum that was going to a global audience through the use of Twitter (@YETMedia) and the hashtag #YET18. Throughout the day Michael tweeted updates of the sessions and topical debates.

(Mention was made throughout the day to the proliferation of handsome bald men taking the stage... but that's another story...)

Session 1:

Effective pre-expedition medical screening

James Moore. Director, Travel Health Consultancy

Expedition medic, pre-travel health specialist and member of the RGS' medical cell.

James described an expedition to Borneo where the group was made up of a variety of young people, amongst which were some who had eating disorders, were not physically or mentally prepared, and sent under the parental/medical premise of “it will be good for you”. Effective pre-expedition medical screening could have pre-empted many of the problems that were later encountered.

What does your company / charity / organisation want to offer?

If you want to offer technical ascents at altitude, do you have the necessary skills and pre-departure assessment capability to offer it effectively? It's OK to NOT offer every kind of expedition – everyone needs to know where their limits are and stick to them.

What does your existing screening consist of?

- Two lines on a booking form asking for “any pre-existing medical conditions”
- Ability to swim across a river/muddy lake, even if going to a desert?
- Acceptance based on a number of different criteria specific to the requirements of the expedition?

2 – 3 months later, past medical histories crop up, causing problems: you need to ask yourself: “What do you want to achieve with your pre-expedition medical screening?”

A successful expedition is based on finding a balance between the goals of the expedition vs the ability / needs of the individual. Problems arise when there is an imbalance between these. Often expedition providers are blind to:

- Past medical history

- Fitness
- Character
- Ability
- Relationships within the group

Yet for a successful expedition, these things must be matched to the expedition, including:

- Environment
- Duration
- Tasks
- Activities

Expedition incidents:

These can generally be classified into three types:

1. **Unforeseen** (e.g.):
 - Road Traffic Accident
 - Illness
 - Injury
2. **Declared** (e.g. something arising from a past medical history)
3. **Undeclared** past medical histories – potentially a huge problem, so how do we reduce the instances of this third type?

Effective pre-expedition screening:

It is important to ask the right questions, in the right way:

Is everyone medically suitable?

- Are they physically / mentally *able* to take part?
- Is the expedition itinerary suitable?
- Are they capable to the tasks required of them?

Is the group suitable?

- This includes group dynamics
- Ask difficult questions about who wants to come on the trip. This can be uncomfortable, but it needs to be done.
- What is the peer groups' perspective of someone joining the trip? If 13 people get on really well yet they all think the 14th group is difficult to get on with and will spoil their expedition, what would you do?
- Will everyone fit in?
- Can negative group dynamics be prevented through selection / team building prior to departure?

Selection vs Inclusivity:

A balance needs to be found between the two. There is often a perceived fear amongst those wanting to join an expedition that the selection process is divisive, that it is intended to *prevent* them going abroad. It is important that everyone knows *why* the selection process is done.

It boils down to:

- Good communication from the start
- How we ask the questions is important
- Honesty about the potential issues

Managing declared past medical histories:

Most past medical histories are manageable and it is rarely the case when an existing medical condition prevents someone from travelling on an expedition. However, they require effort, care, extra training (of individuals, leaders and potentially teachers).

Question? How many expedition leaders have been on courses for managing:

- Behavioural issues
- Neuropsychiatric disorders such as Turett's or ADHD
- Autism disorders, such as Asberger syndrome

James suggested that perhaps such courses / training should be an integral part of an expedition leaders training?

Expedition provider preparation

Providers need internal medical expertise specific to the areas/environments in which they operate. They also need to allow time to clear individuals onto each trip. Some conditions may be OK provided that certain improvements are made prior to departure. In this case, it is important to set clear guidelines as to what is expected of the expeditioner and the ramifications if these guidelines are not met.

GP / Specialist reports

GP / Specialist reports may be required as to whether:

- The condition is stable
- Will it remain stable

Be aware of specialist knowledge - How much does the expeditioner's own GP or specialist know about expedition issues and the common problems associated with expeditions?

Ensure specific mechanisms are in place:

- Leadership awareness – can they cope? Do they have the necessary skills?
- Medical expertise on call if necessary?
- Has insurance cover been cleared for pre-existing conditions?

Risk with reward and Pitfalls

Taking children with pre-existing medical and/or behavioural conditions on expeditions carries risks, but that has to be balanced with the reward for the young person and their peers. A few areas to think about:

- Is there an risk that the leader could spend too much time with one person at the expense of others so that their experience is diminished. Is that fair on them?
- Why don't people declare pre-existing conditions?
- A 'retrospectroscope' would be a very useful piece of equipment!
- Ultimately, when making the decision as to whether a person travels or not, perhaps a question of "would I want my own son or daughter on that trip with these people?" is a good way to look at it.

Discussion on James' presentation:

A few were worried that an increased pre-travel assessment would mean lower numbers on expeditions. It was argued that his shouldn't need to be the case. It needs to be made clear that pre-screening is not about preventing people from joining the expedition. It's about ensuring everyone is safe and well cared for and that appropriate plans can be put in plans.

"We had someone who ate 'only potatoes and chocolate' and yet nothing was declared on any forms."

It is important to ask the questions in the right way, but even so, there will always be some who don't let you know everything they should.

Organisations need to be honest that they can't 'take anyone' on expedition. Decide who you can comfortably cope with on expedition. It's OK to say 'no'. (but to lessen the impact, why not qualify that with "if you work on this or that, then there's no reason why you can't join an expedition in future years.")

The commerciality of modern youth expeditions has meant a decreased ability to adequately pre-assess all expeditioners.

"Inclusivity" – are we shoe-horning young people into 'normal' expeditions, or are we designing expeditions around young people's needs and abilities. Surely "inclusivity" is all about the later if it is to be done properly.

Not all things can be covered in pre-assessment though: Chris Blessington gave a story of how one girl on expedition in South Africa ate most of the food and made little attempt to share it. She also washed her feet in drinking water that had to be carried up 200m from the river below. It turned out she had been home educated and had never had to fit in with others. Therefore had a lack of general social perception. Expedition leaders need to adapt, manage and lead.

Session 2:

Pre-expedition training, overseas delivery and post-expedition issues: working with dis-advantaged and behaviourally challenged young people.

Angus Wingfield: Director Africa Wild Trails

Angus introduced himself (amongst other things, as another handsome bald man...). With a background of working with homeless and previously homeless people, he didn't feel this was enough. He was lucky enough to go to Africa on an expedition and as a result, started developing expedition programmes to Africa for young people.

There are two opportunities:

1. To work with young people who become challenging in a given situation
2. To work with young people who are already challenging

Angus generally works with those in the second group, and particularly those at the most challenging end of the spectrum – those who have often been rejected by other help initiatives.

Defining Challenging behaviour

Turn the tables and think about who is actually challenged? Is it the young person or is it someone else who is challenged by the difficulties of dealing with their behaviour?

Challenging behaviours may be caused by many kinds of factors:

⦿ **Biological**

Physical pain, medication, disability, weight, fitness,

⦿ **Social**

Poor social skills, the need for an element of control, lack of knowledge of social norms, insensitivity to others wishes and needs

⦿ **Environmental**

A lack of noise, no mobile phone, no social media, no close friends, strange environments, out of the comfort zone activities, cannot retreat from the problem

⊙ **Other anxieties**

Feeling excluded, lonely, devalued, labelled, disempowered, people's negative expectations, abusive history, mental strength

Examples include young people who:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ⊙ Are disrespectful | ⊙ Drug users |
| ⊙ Abusive history | ⊙ Offenders |
| ⊙ Finds it hard to focus | ⊙ Argumentative |
| ⊙ Have learning difficulties | ⊙ Neglected |
| ⊙ Are disabled | ⊙ Physically weak |
| ⊙ Use bad language | ⊙ Emotionally weak |
| ⊙ Show aggressive behaviour | ⊙ Not team players |
| ⊙ Are over weight | ⊙ Don't work well on their own |
| ⊙ Malnourished | ⊙ Cannot complete tasks |
| ⊙ Smokers | ⊙ Antisocial behaviour |
| ⊙ Alcohol users | ⊙ Doesn't listen |

It is important to remember that many young people communicate through their behavior and all behavior has meaning.

Challenging behaviour has a process:

1. Triggers
2. Escalation
3. Crisis
4. Recovery

Problems from this behaviour can be lessened by:

- Finding out what the problems might be and what triggers them
- Planning how the behaviour can be managed to prevent or minimise an escalation.
- By planning ahead the recovery will be quicker.

Process

Working with challenged young people is different. You have to plan the process, work on a diverse programme and then choose the young people you want to take. You need to anticipate problems:

“If taking children with problems on expedition, expect to have problems”.

It is how those problems are anticipated and dealt with that defines how those problems are perceived and what their impact will be. Plan your process, develop a great, diverse programme, then chose your young people. Your process should include:

- Pre-Selection
- Selection
- Preparation
- Execution
- Post Expedition

Pre-selection

Consultation

Identify previous good practice, are there experienced organisations in similar fields, talk to current leaders, managers, your board, other interested parties.

Ethos

Why are we doing this? Who are we doing this for? What is the spirit in which we undertake this? Bear in mind there is often a lack of YP enthusiasm, at least initially.



Current Leader skills

You will need to conduct a skills audit. Consider needs for training, resilience, interviewing, appropriate engagement, experience of leader.

Establish your cohort of young people

You need a mix of YP. You can't just go into a young offenders Institute and say "we want 10 Young People to come on an expedition" – nightmare! You need to Risk Assess/Manage how the group are going to work together and how the leader team is going to cope. You need to work out your selection process and identifying triggers.

Promotion

Where? How? When? Why? Diverse and adventurous programme of physical, mental and emotional challenge. Can anyone apply?

Selection

Application process / Appropriate Scoring

- This is a process to find those YPs that fit your ethos
- Be realistic about your own expectations: Don't expect too much initially
- Information gathering, Detail and History are important

Selection days/ Interviews

- Listen, be tolerant. It is easy to make initial judgments. Everyone does it, but they need to be put aside.
- Triggers/ Risk Management Q&As
- Initial judgments
- You should be struggling to turn young people down

2nd Interviews

- Risk Management

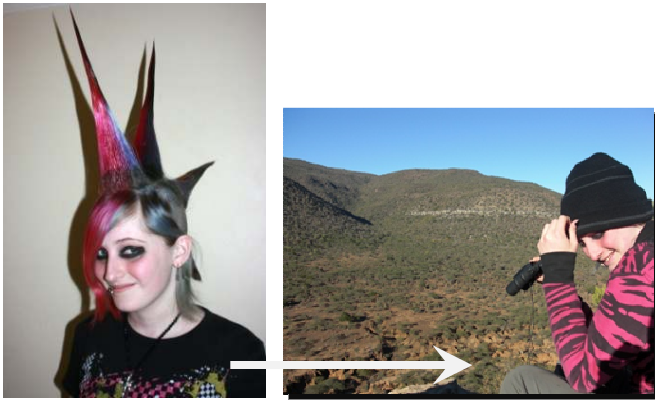
Options / decision making

- Accept, Not Accept, Waiting List, or perhaps an alternative?

These decisions are not easy. It is a very specialist area. Right at the start there is often a distinct lack of enthusiasm amongst challenging young people. This is understandable given:

- There is often no history within their family of adventure

- They are told it is going to be good but they just can't see it
- When they are chosen, they are surprised as perhaps they showed no signs of engagement or willingness to take part. Remember that all behaviour communicates meaning.



Preparation

PREPARATION

I can do statements
Problem solving
Balance
Risk Management
Inner Journey
Take Action

Self esteem
Resilience
Outer Journey
Agents of change

Young Peoples preparation T.U.C.

- Duration
- Explain your expertise!
- Expectations/ trust/ Unchecked Responsibility
- Teams/ buddy pairs
- Code of Conduct/ Safeguarding
- Risk Management/ triggers, misinformation
- Research & Assignments (ownership)
- Fund raising (ownership)
- Ownership (how if not fund raising?)
- Carrot and Stick
- Quizzes (confidence)

Leader preparation

- Standard Leader preparation
- Appropriate Leaders?
- Duration/never let young people down
- Expect challenging behaviour
- Leader triggers/ exhaustion/ care
- Role play, scenarios, brain storm
- Know each yp/ plan for incidents
- Training/ formal and informal

Notes on above preparation graphic:

Young people:

The young person's inner journey is perhaps the most important. This is their skill development, their empowerment, the things they can take away from the expedition experience and use in later life. Put together an 'I can do' list – establish what they can already do

Ownership

The fact that young people are on the trip is great. In many situations, it is totally unrealistic for challenged young people to raise the funds for their own expedition – their back grounds and networks simply don't offer that possibility. That doesn't decrease ownership of the expedition though. Ownership can be created / installed from other aspects such as involvement in all aspects of the expedition planning.

Leaders

Explain your expertise to the Young People, explain 'why' you have the ability to take this YP on this trip'. Every expedition leader requires support from an adult that really knows the Young person and goes through the whole process with them. This gives the YP support at every stage and someone who understands everything that they have been through. This is MOST important as that person needs to still be there with the YP after the expedition is over.

Leaders need to be tolerant, compassionate, understand a YPs history, patient. Understand the likely problem before you go abroad. Do role plays. Ultimately though, even with the best planning, you should still expect problems.

Execution

By now, you have a High impact expedition designed around and focused on the YPs abilities. The challenges are appropriate to their physical capability, and different sections of the expedition need to be designed to challenge different people and their comfort zones. Reassurance at the right time is critical.



- Despite all the planning and YPs ownership, you need to review Triggers and Manage Crises. Expect problems, but they may not be the problems you were expecting. Just because you are dealing with challenging young people, it does not mean the usual issues like blisters or dodgy bowels do not occur – leaders need to remember that issues may not be caused by the 'obvious' triggers.
- Unchecked Responsibility: Give the YPs 'unchecked responsibility'. This gives the young people proper, empowering responsibility. We're NOT talking about 'go and get me 8 onions for dinner', we're talking about giving the YP real responsibility and not following up (checking) on them. An example would be giving the keys to the expedition vehicle to a YP with a history of car theft and give them the responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is checked and ready to go.
- Experiential learning on a diverse itinerary
- In country leaders
- External Leaders
- Duration
- Final Exam

Post Expedition

The post expedition phase is hugely important. It is important to remember that:

- "expeditions are life changing" – Occasionally

- “expeditions are life enhancing” – most
- **But most challenging YPs return from Expedition and go back to the same issues in the same environment as before.** Rooms will feel small and claustrophobic and their social circle will not understand what the YP has gone through on their inner journey. If not managed correctly, ‘life’ may even feel worse than before the embarked on the expedition journey.

Recognising and preparing for this is vital:

- Prepare prior to departure
- 1 on 1 session after return (lots of them)
- Support and guidance for the YP from the adult who has been with them on the whole journey.
- Action projects – have a plan for the whole process and learning opportunities and where the YP should / can go from here.
- Recognise that experiential learning is often the first time in a YPs life that education has been of interest.
- Ensure you have a formal ending of the programme.

Final thoughts

“After all our risk management processes is hard then to make decisions that might deliberately increase risk by accepting more challenging young people. But if we take that risk, trust those young people, prepare them well and believe in their ability from the beginning until the end, then we can really effect some lasting change.”

In order to achieve these real outcomes for challenging young people we must come from a genuine place of understanding, of tolerance, of compassion and a deep held belief that the process we put in place for them, combined with our expertise and exposure to the natural world, is an extremely powerful journey indeed.

Discussion on Angus’ session

Chris Blessington thanked Angus and summed up by confirming that working with challenging young people needs a radically different approach. Trust has to be built up between the YP and the leader / leader team. Get that wrong and everything else falls apart. It is important to remember that many of these YPs have never trusted an adult in their lives.

Shane Winsor: “Angus, would you be prepared to share examples of when you’ve got it wrong? What are the common mistakes?”

Angus:

- Leaders. If it goes wrong, it goes wrong with the leaders, never the Young People.
- Mistakes have been not setting out clear expectations of the leaders.
- When problems occur, if leaders have not been trained or are not capable of dealing with the problem, then it escalates. That means the issue is no longer an opportunity for the YP to really learning something. Thus the main trick / opportunity of the expedition situation is missed. It is always the leader’s lack of expertise that results in missing this opportunity, not the YP behavior.
- Not testing leaders properly in the leader selection phase. You need to do an awful lot of role playing and scenarios. It is often the aggressive YPs that leaders find the most challenging.
- It is a good idea to reverse roles in the pre-trip training, so that the YPs become the leaders for a while and the leaders play the role of the YPs.
- The key to successful leaders is:

- Recognising triggers
- Expecting problems to occur
- Escalation or diffusion – success is how quickly the situation can be recovered.

I'm sure I speak for all who attended the day when I say that Angus was an absolute inspiration. I would like to extend the Trusts' sincere thanks for his input.

12.45 - 13.30 Buffet / Sandwich Lunch kindly provided by Peter Symonds College for a small fee on the day.

Afternoon session:

The Hottest Classroom Expedition (A personal perspective) and perspectives from an expedition leader and personal tutor.

- *Robbie Kilgallon, Student and member of 'The Hottest Classroom' expedition to Tanzania, summer 2012.*
- *Michael Sturman, personal tutor & sailing expedition leader, Avocet House*

Robbie presented tales of his Africa expedition with relish. This was an expedition filmed for TV with an application process of over 1000 young people. They were short listed to just over 30 for the initial selection weekend, from which a final group of 11 YP were chosen. Robbie felt extremely lucky to be chosen – he very nearly hadn't applied and it was only through the encouragement of his tutor that he got his application in at the last moment.

We saw various images from the trip as well as a few key moments of video from both the selection weekends and the expedition itself.

Highlights of the expedition and the real eye-openers included meeting lots of different people, visiting a small school with very basic facilities and hearing about the children's long journey to school, digging toilet latrines, dealing with punctures, lots of early mornings (not a highlight!) and the 'zebra crossing'...!

Michael Sturman: One of the biggest challenges was raising the £5000 required for the expedition. It was important for Robbie to take ownership of this and through a series of press reports, local marketing, support networks, guest speakers and hard work, he managed to raise £4000 in just 4 months.

The "Duet Expedition"

Michael described his leadership of another expedition that Robbie was involved in, the Tall ship expedition aboard The Duet. The plan was to take three 'challenging' teenagers on a multiday sailing journey to touch port in Holland, Belgium or France. The teenagers gained their "competent crew" award during the trip.

Due to poor weather, they could not cross the channel and returned to Kent, only to try to cross later to France. Again they were thwarted. The constant set backs and inability to achieve goals could have been a very challenging situation for the YPs. The reason it worked is that the everyone worked as a team. There were not "challenged YP" and "leaders". Everyone works together.

Michael himself had had a difficult upbringing and new from early on that he wanted to lead his own trips. The Duet expedition was one he planned himself.

Discussion:

Q: “Robbie, did you have time on the expedition to appreciate what you were seeing”

A: “Not really. It was only on return that the successes of it became clear.”

Q: “Robbie, what would you like your leader to have / do on an expedition?”

A: “To drop the ‘labels’ of ‘challenging’ etc. Don’t judge young people. Treat us on the same level.”

Q: The media had labels the group as “unteachable” – which was hugely degrading and untrue. How did this make you feel?

A: Feedback shows that expeditions can be a huge success and YPs do learn and develop on such trips – as long as the preparation and planning are done correctly.

Q: How did the expedition come about?

A: Avocet House is part of an “engaged network” of other schools. Springfield School (another school in the network) had the idea of an expedition and asked others to apply. They have a “no limits” approach.

Q: “What were the difficulties you had on the expedition and were there any issues, Robbie?”

A: “There were some arguments. I found it difficult to be introduced to YP who I didn’t know”.

Q: “Did the media / TV crew look for situations that they thought would make good TV?”

A: “Yes a bit. I preferred to stay out of the camera where possible, but some actively sort it the lime light.”

Q: Do you think the expedition has changed you?

A: Definitely. I’m much more confident now and taking on challenges. I am more focused on my school work and have a progression plan in place and options for places at college. I’m also arranging a Lowestoft to St. David’s bike ride and a local “Whole hog” run for the community. As part of the sailing expedition I, along with others, got to meet Sarah Outen and have a go in her Pacific Rowing boat “Happy Socks”.

Chris Blessington: It is important to remember in Robbie’s story that out of 1000 applicants, there were only 11 allowed on the expedition. That means there must be 989 young people who WANT to do gain the benefits of adventure and expeditions. We have a duty to see that as many as possible do so. We should use our ‘island’ for those who can’t afford to or have the opportunity to do stuff overseas.

Mike Blakey raised a concern with ‘labelling’, which led to a new area of debate:

- Challenging YP can be described with issues, yet they are resourceful and have many talents.
- Some YPs are just not ‘school shaped’, but at risk youth shouldn’t be described as ‘troubled / challenging’ etc.
- Angus: I would NEVER tell a YP that they are going on an expedition *because* they are damaged / at risk. It is counter productive.
- Descriptions are useful as they enable people to understand and focus their efforts, but labels are not.
- As seen above, the Press will sensationalise things and care must be taken. Is it really a good thing for the young people to be portrayed by the media? Someone else commented that you should never involve the media as you have no control over the language used. (And that 75% of all media on YP is negative).
- Who is being challenged here? Is it the YP or the leader. It will certainly be the leader if he/she has not got the expertise to manage the situation. This led to a new area of talk about specific training for leaders for expeditions that involve challenging YP.

Mention was made of the Ocean Youth Trust Scotland, which offers whole packages and good, well structured expedition programmes. We should not be defined in our thinking to land based overseas expeditions.

Following up on the expedition experience

- Can there be some form of follow up after an expedition to ensure there is a hand rail to extend the involvement after return. E.g. help into careers, how to move forward?
 - This is an absolute necessity when dealing with challenging YP as we have heard. The process must be bespoke as well – if the YPs have an enthusiasm to lean then this MUST be directed and nourished to ensure the opportunities are fulfilled.
 - This can be carried through to other groups too.
 - There needs to be an opportunity to celebrate the success of a trip – much like BES’ “gathering day”. James Dyer from BES told us a little more about this event:
 - The expedition group works together after they get back in the elad up to the gathering day.
 - It is an extension of the trip and a chance to condense the benefits that ensures a real legacy.
 - BES sees the post expedition work as vital.
 - School expeditions generally finish in August, when ‘school’s out’. Would it be worth following this up in September?
 - Leaders, Schools and expedition companies should be encouraged to maximise opportunities and consider that when expeditions go badly wrong what follow up is there after the end of the exped?
 - This comes back to the overall profile and looking at / selling the whole package so that the most is made of opportunities.

Resources:

Is there a list of resources or sources of information available to people / groups wanting to plan expeditions for challenging young people?

- Look at the “joining an expedition” page on the RGS website.
- Also look at Suresh Paul and the Equal Adventure website.
- Also look at YET log book for examples of how to keep YP engaged if they are not deemed ‘ready’ for an expedition yet.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme has something similar – the “Life Zone”. It is:

- For those involved in D of E, but there are resources for all
- Has careers guidance, resources, expedition follow up advice

Raleigh also has its “Global Ambassadors” programme which connects issues in country with the YPs experience.

YET Young Person forum / membership

Graham Derrick mentioned an idea of a YET young person conference for which there was lots of support amongst those present.

Summing up:

Chris Blessington: There was a general sense of achievement from the day. It is a difficult topic but everyone hopefully took away some very valuable lessons. There is still a tendency to not to think we have to talk to other companies or organisations, but we should all be working together on the broader areas that affect us all.

Minority groups

One area which wasn't covered, but which most felt was important, was that the young people going on these expeditions are almost exclusively white. How do we change that? We should be actively seeking out groups and ethnic minorities and encourage those who don't tend to get involved to have more of an involvement in expeditions and adventure.

Where next?

There was general agreement that more needs to be done in training leaders for working with challenging young people (*see below for leader training*)

For the next forum we will be sticking with the topic of inclusivity:

Physical disability and how to effectively get less able bodied young people to join in the expedition experience.

Date: yet to be decided, but it will be in late Nov / Dec

Venue: yet to be decided, but it will be in the Midlands.

Opportunities for leader training

Angus has kindly agreed to offer training to leaders and organisations wanting to work with disadvantaged and challenging young people. It is suggested that this is a combination of both formal and informal training. The informal training often has most value as this is given by those who have a lot to offer based on personal experience and overcoming adversity of some kind. We may not be achieving any formal qualification here, but we are gaining invaluable knowledge.

The training sessions for Expedition Leaders would help those who want to learn more about coping with challenging behaviour when it arises. The training would run through initial engagement, pre-selection, selection, preparation and execution.

Due to time pressures there will have to be a cost attached to this training. If you are interested in knowing more, please contact Angus directly:

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My thanks again to Helen Littlejohn and The Peter Symonds College for their hosting of this forum.

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