

GIRVAN YOUTH TRUST'S OUTWARD BOUND COURSE

SUMMARY OF SUPPORT

In September 2017, The Jo Walters Trust gave a generous donation of £5,220 to The Outward Bound Trust. This enabled **five young people**¹ from **Girvan Youth Trust** – an organisation that aims to engage with local young people with a view to supporting them to make positive and healthy life choices – to attend a three-day Outward Bound course at our Loch Eil centre from **23rd – 25th July 2018**. During their course, they had the opportunity to develop their confidence, self-awareness, resilience, problem-solving and team working skills.

Table 1: Background information on the course participants

No. of young people	Age of young people	Purpose of course	Participants' background
5	14 to 18 years	To enhance the group dynamics and leadership abilities of the group, in turn empowering them to take ownership of the group. To help the group to work as part of a team.	Girvan is an isolated rural community in South Ayrshire and is in the 10% most deprived communities in Scotland ² . The lack of opportunity in the area results in the young people lacking self-confidence, having low expectations and poor social skills.

THE EXPERIENCE

The purpose of the course was to help the young people build stronger relationships with each other, with some of the older participants acting as mentors to the younger members of the group. During the three days, they took part a range of team-focused activities including the leap of faith, a **canoeing expedition** and **gorge walking**, whilst the learning focused around **communication** and **understanding their “inner chimp”**³ – a way of thinking about their irrational, emotional impulses and how to manage them in favour of more **planned** and **considered choices**.

Their instructor used different experiences during the course to help the participants think about different team roles and communication styles. The young people were also given the opportunity to choose what activities they wanted to use to challenge themselves, which helped them to feel empowered and confident about making positive choices.

¹ Six young people were due to attend, but one cancelled shortly before the course.

² Using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data.

³ <https://chimpmanagement.com/the-chimp-paradox/>

THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of their course, the participants and their accompanying youth workers completed feedback forms. Their comments indicate that the course met its objectives. In particular, it **developed the young people’s confidence, self-awareness and belief in their abilities, awareness of other people’s strengths, resilience and ability to solve problems**⁴.

Increased confidence and self-awareness

During the course, the young people were presented with mental and physical challenges that they did not think they would be able to overcome. As they worked together as a team and supported one another, they were able to complete the challenges and their confidence grew.

- **All five participants** reported that they were more aware of their strengths.
- **All five participants** reported that they were more aware of the skills they need to develop in the future.
- **Four of the five participants** reported that they felt more confident in themselves.
- **Both youth workers** reported that the young people had realised that they were capable of more than they had thought.

“I really enjoyed the gorge walking as I have never done anything like it before and it really pushed me outside of my comfort zone.” **Briony, 14**

“I learnt that not everything is as easy as we want and that we have to fight against it to get where we want.” **Natasha, 15**

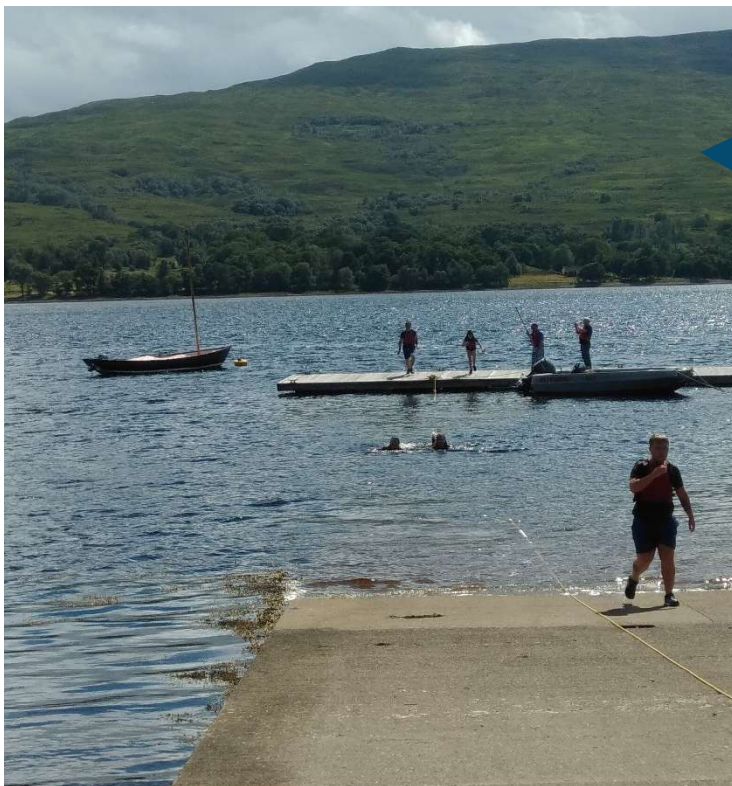


⁴ All participant names have been changed.

Improved resilience and problem-solving

Many of the activities required the young people to work together as a team to support each other during challenging moments and to take a solution-oriented approach to tackling challenges. This developed their resilience and helped them develop a positive mindset for solving problems. At the end of the course:

- **Four of the five participants** thought they would be **better able to solve problems** in the future.
- **Four of the five participants** thought they would be **more likely to keep going when they face difficulties in the future**.
- **Both youth workers** reported that the young people had developed skills in setting personal goals and would be able to persevere when faced with challenges in the future.



“I overcame my fear of jumping in cold water. I did it by letting my inner chimp know that it would be okay and just going for it so I couldn’t overthink it too much.”

Briony, 14

Improved skills in working with others

Many of the activities required the young people to work as a team. This developed their understanding of other people’s skills, the value of teamwork in achieving shared goals and their ability to work with others. At the end of the course:

- **Four of the five participants** agreed that they were more aware of other people’s strengths.
- **Both youth workers** agreed that the young people developed their ability to work collaboratively with others.

“One of my challenges was taking a step back from trying to lead and listening more. I gave myself space and thought about what I was doing. I learnt the importance of working together and what listening to others can do.” **Nathan, 18**

“I learnt that it was easier to do something with other people encouraging you and supporting you.” **Briony, 14**

“My biggest challenge was helping others. When I got ahead a bit, I’d wait and lend a hand to others and I felt proud. I learned how to contain my inner chimp and to listen to others.” **Tina, 15**

“I really enjoyed the gorge walking as it really bonded us as a group.” **Natasha, 15**



MESSAGES FROM THE GROUP

The young people’s youth workers wished to express their gratitude for the funding that made it possible for the group to attend the Outward Bound course

“Thanks very much. I have seen my group grow in confidence and they all learned to help one and other and conquer their fears.” **Heather McCafferty, Youth Worker, Girvan Youth Trust**

“Thank you for sponsoring this activity. Our young people have taken so much from this experience and will be able to use what they have achieved / learned to enhance their own and other young people’s self-esteem.” **David McCue, Youth Worker, Girvan Youth Trust**