

# THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST'S THEORY OF CHANGE

## OUR APPROACH... WHAT IT MEANS TO BE OUTWARD BOUND<sup>1</sup>.

### AUTHENTIC ADVENTURE

Adventure provides opportunities for individuals to respond to challenge and uncertainty. When positively experienced, this encourages them to embrace, rather than avoid, challenge and uncertainty in the future. Research confirms that adventure in natural environments improves psychological outcomes such as self-efficacy, resilience and well-being<sup>2</sup>.

### IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Wild and unpredictable environments, such as those in which we operate, provide optimum conditions for authentic adventure to take place. Learning that takes place in natural settings has been associated with outcomes ranging from increased knowledge and understanding, the development of skills, improved attitudes and behaviours to health and well-being and self-worth<sup>3</sup>.

### DELIBERATE LEARNING

Programmes delivered with specific outcomes and integrated into the curriculum have been shown to deliver stronger and more lasting outcomes<sup>4,5</sup>. Learning strategies such as goal-setting<sup>6</sup> and feedback<sup>7</sup> are effective at improving pupil outcomes. Instructors, qualified both as outdoor practitioners and to facilitate learning, work with participants for the duration of their course. The instructor has been shown to be an important factor in the effectiveness of outdoor learning programmes<sup>8</sup>.

### THE RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Research has shown that residential impact on relationships between peers, as well as between staff and students; develop resilience, self-confidence and well-being; and improve engagement with learning, behaviour, and preparedness for transitions into new environments<sup>5</sup>.

## WHAT HAPPENS DURING A COURSE:

Participants achieve more than they believe themselves capable of

Participants overcome physical and emotional **challenges** in the natural environment which require **sustained effort** and result in **emotional reward**

Participants approach tasks that require planning and team cohesion, and reflect on their performance

Participants **live and work with others**

## WHAT THIS ACHIEVES:

Participants become more **aware of their capabilities** and develop **confidence and self-belief**

Participants develop **perseverance, resilience and problem-solving skills**

Participants become better at **planning and setting goals**; and develop **personal responsibility**

Stronger **relationships** are formed, contributing to the development of **social skills**, such as teamwork, communication, leadership and empathy

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

Participants have higher **aspirations** and **expectations** for the future

Participants develop the **mental strength** needed to cope with setbacks and work towards their aspirations

Participants are better equipped to **plan** the steps they need to achieve their goals and **follow through with them**

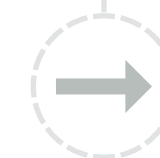
Participants are better able to **work in environments** that require them to work **alongside others** to achieve their goals

Alongside the above personal outcomes, participants engage positively with inspirational natural environments, increasing their awareness and sense of personal responsibility towards them.

The Outward Bound course acts as a **catalyst** for positive change. The positive results seen from small changes encourage further change, and thus young people continue to develop following their Outward Bound course.



**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED WITH THE ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS THEY NEED TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES**




**YOUNG PEOPLE THRIVE IN THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AT WORK, AND THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES**

The environment to which participants return after the course must provide opportunities for them to continue to develop.

1 The Outward Bound Trust (2017). What it means to be Outward Bound. The Outward Bound Trust.  
 2 Clough, P. et al (2016) Adventurous Physical Activity Environments: A Mainstream Intervention for Mental Health. Sports Medicine.  
 3 Dillon, J. & Dickie, I. (2012). Learning in the Natural Environment: Review of social and economic benefits and barriers. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 092.  
 4 Christie, B.; Higgins, P.; McLaughlin, P. (2013) 'Did you enjoy your holiday?' Can residential outdoor learning benefit mainstream schooling? Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning.

5 Kendal, S. and Rodger, J. (2015) Evaluation of Learning Away. Final Report. York Consulting.  
 6 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teachinglearning-toolkit/meta-cognition-and-self-regulation/>.  
 7 Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research 77.1 pp 81-112.  
 8 McKenzie, M. (2000). How are Adventure Education Program Outcomes Achieved?: A review of the literature. Australian Journal of Outdoor Education - Vol. 5 No. 1 2000.