As I outlined in last year’s Impact Report, Outward Bound has historical foundations, being forged in the cold waters of the North Sea. Although these foundations are something that we are proud of, it is important that we recognise how Outward Bound is now far more than just its history.

Whilst the elements of challenge, and to some extent ‘hardship’, remain, nobody is ‘forced’ to jump into freezing cold sea water. As society has changed, so has the Outward Bound experience in response to the needs of the participants we encounter. For example, OBHK’s original courses were 28 days in length and the experiences of the Alumni show that these courses had huge impact. Time is a valuable commodity in today’s society and as a result our courses have reduced in length – but not impact.

This Impact Report shows clearly how Outward Bound remains relevant, particularly in today’s Hong Kong. The development of our young people has been identified as a focus for the current administration and the adoption of the Youth Development Strategy provides a road map for that development. Given that the government’s priorities align with our measured outcomes, Outward Bound is perfectly positioned to play an ever-increasing role in Hong Kong. As this report shows, we have been serving our young population well for 50 years. By adapting what we do to meet current demands and trends, we are all set to increase our impact in the coming years.

N. Cotton
Executive Director
WHAT IS OUTWARD BOUND HONG KONG?

Outward Bound Hong Kong is a non-political, non-religious, mission-driven organisation dedicated to building valuable life skills as an adjunct to traditional mainstream education. It achieves this by undertaking wilderness expeditions that are facilitated and focus on the formation of life skills such as resilience, determination, teamwork and lateral thinking. These skills are often not intentionally developed through conventional educational channels but nonetheless are considered important to lead a healthy and fulfilling life and vital to help achieve one's full potential.

We consider three essential elements to be key to an Outward Bound course:

Our People

Quality, well-trained staff who are able to facilitate effective learning out of the experience

Our Process

We intentionally ensure that our participants learn about themselves while they are on course so that they can be better equipped for their life 'back home'

Our Places

Courses take place in the outdoors and take participants to remote and beautiful locations they may not have visited before

We consciously design courses to respond to the needs of the participants. Staff assess the needs and abilities of the participants, consider the order and flow of the different elements of the course and, importantly, how to facilitate the experiential process that ensures students draw significant learning from their experience. That might lead to diverting from the original plan in response to the needs of the participants in order to increase or decrease the level of challenge, or to allow the participants to take on more leadership and independence. The outdoors is our classroom, but the real catalyst for learning is the ability of our staff to help students realise learnings and transfer them to their daily lives. We invest heavily in staff training and development, but to be truly effective this has to be combined with their energy and dedication.
2017 OVERVIEW

Number of organisations we worked with in 2017:

Schools 121
Non-government Organisations 18

Number of participants:

School, Community, Public Courses 5320
O&I Professional 809

Number of sponsored participants:

Number of sponsored participants in 2017 2147
Sponsored participants ratio 40.36%
INTRODUCTION
TO OUTCOMES

For several years Outward Bound Hong Kong has been working with leading international educational consultants in outdoor adventure education to identify and communicate the effectiveness of courses. The robust Programme Evaluation system is a collaborative effort by these educational experts where pre- and post-course questionnaires are used to measure and communicate change against the stated learning outcomes of courses at Outward Bound Hong Kong.

Participants are asked to complete a set of questionnaires before and after the course. Scores are then recorded and calculated to measure the change in participants.

Growth and change can be represented in various ways; for ease of interpretation the following data is shown as a measure of ‘effect size’. The data generated shows that Outward Bound Hong Kong courses have positive impact on the participants, who are then better equipped to contribute to society in the future.

Effectiveness of these courses are measured against the recognised industry average for outdoor adventure education, which is marked on the chart and is recognized to be 0.34. These international averages have been peer-reviewed and verified through studies on the impact of outdoor education courses, and it is against these measures that educational experts have benchmarked the Outward Bound performance measurement process and used for comparison.

Methodology

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How we express change.

Effect size measures the strength of change, or impactfulness of the course, on course outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect size</th>
<th>r²</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>0.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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r² is a statistical method for measuring percentage change in variables over time.
**EDUCATION COURSES**
**PEQ RESULTS**
*January 2017 – December 2017*

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- Small: 0.20
- Medium: 0.50
- Large: 0.80

\( r^2 \) is a statistical method for measuring percentage change in variables over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Evaluation</th>
<th>Compassion</th>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Self-Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry Standard</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects size</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
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**Compassion**
The belief that one senses the needs of others and makes helping others a personal priority. It measures a person’s empathy and ability to assist others to achieve desired outcomes and motivating those that are struggling.

**Resilience**
The perception of one’s ability to effectively deal with challenges, and the capacity to persevere through difficulties; toughness, perseverance, sustained effort.

**Self-Responsibility**
The perception that one autonomously initiates action when a need exists. It measures the state of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for actions and consequences within one’s power, control, or management.
The Youth Development Strategy for Hong Kong: Public Engagement Report produced by the Commission on Youth in 2018, clearly recognises the importance of developing resilience in Hong Kong’s youth:

“Respondents suggested that the Government should put in effort to provide more resilience training to young people and help them develop a positive attitude to life.” (Section 3.3.2, Page 37)

**Resilience**

Resilience is the capacity to persevere through difficulties and apply sustained effort. Increases in resilience suggest a person is more likely to display strength of character and ‘grit’ when facing hardship and adversity.

At Outward Bound there are many controlled and monitored opportunities for developing resilience. For example, the simple act of engaging in an uninterrupted journey without the ‘creature comforts’ of home such as mattresses, showers and air-conditioning is an excellent foundation for this. Furthermore, the ability to remain positive in the face of the difficulties posed by the Hong Kong weather is also a great platform for building resilience, as is the physicality of tasks like sea-kayaking for several days to move from location to location.

Resilience is among the most improved areas for participants of journey-based courses. For a young person facing the stresses of secondary school, changing relationships and social pressures, being more resilient and having improved coping strategies is extremely valuable and will help them meet with more success.

This journey will always be important in my life. Whenever I encounter any situation I thought that I will not overcome, I will tell myself to hold on a little bit longer... and then I will overcome it. Everything is worth giving a chance.

_A participant in the Second Chance programme, sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club_

Had we not persisted, we could have dropped out in the midway of the journey; our group succeeded in accomplishing goals with strong will and clear goals.

_A participant in the Character Building programme, sponsored by the Lee Hysan Foundation_
Soft skills are harder to clearly define – and yet everyone knows when someone has effective soft skills. Our evaluation system specifically measures Compassion and Self-responsibility which are components of the soft skills that are much valued in schools and sought after by employees.

These soft skills have also been identified in the Youth Development Strategy document as being essential to the economic development of Hong Kong and the employability of its young people.

“Employers considered that many young people were not prepared for work in terms of interpersonal skills, sense of responsibility, self-discipline and common sense.” (Section 3.3.4, Page 38)

**Compassion**

Compassion describes a person’s empathy for others and their practical actions that assist other people to achieve desired outcomes and targets. Increases in compassion indicate a person is more likely to help others by providing both motivation and support.

On an Outward Bound course group members must work together in order to succeed. That means thinking not only of one’s own needs, but the needs of every group member. Everyone will have a low point – being hungry, tired, missing family – but can be encouraged to get through it by the support and compassion extended by team members. This empathy means that the group can achieve the goal of the course, whether that is cooking dinner together, reaching a peak to see the sun rise or completing an 18-day journey together. Our data shows that participants develop considerably in the levels of compassion.

Being more compassionate means being a more capable member of a team - whether that is in a school class, a working group or a family.

**Self-Responsibility**

It is difficult to consider others without looking after oneself. Understanding that there are consequences of one’s actions and that we can change outcomes based on how we act is evaluated through self-responsibility.

An Outward Bound Hong Kong course creates multiple opportunities for young people to develop their self-responsibility. Our trained instructors deliberately take a step back to allow decisions to be made, whether that is choosing the menu, planning a route or selecting a spot to pitch a tent. Importantly, participants must accept the responsibility for the outcomes of these decisions, whether success or failure, and consider what they might do differently next time. Because the outcomes of these experiences are real, rather than simulated, the learning is powerful and this accounts for the impact that an Outward Bound course clearly has on individuals’ self-responsibility.

Such increases in self-responsibility account for the anecdotal feedback that we receive from parents and teachers that the young people have a noticeably different demeanour, being more willing to accept responsibility and finish tasks, even if it is not glamorous such as cleaning a room!
CONCLUSION OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Through this externally-validated evaluation of the impact that our courses have on our participants, we can clearly demonstrate that an Outward Bound course provides opportunities for personal development that exceed the “industry standard” and can be considered “substantial”.

At a time when there is a great deal of emphasis on developing the next generation for a successful, positive and prosperous Hong Kong, Outward Bound’s impact on future generations is significant. What our participants take back into their school life, families and communities will undoubtedly help to improve their own outlook and therefore that of Hong Kong. As the Youth Development Strategy states, “the government should reinforce efforts in teaming up with schools, non-governmental organisations, uniformed groups etc. to groom our youth to develop their generic skills such as co-operation, leadership and teamwork.”

OUTWARD BOUND STORIES

For over 48 years, Outward Bound Hong Kong has been impacting people from all walks of life in Hong Kong, helping them discover and unleash their potential. Impact of Outward Bound courses is not only quantified as numbers, we take this opportunity to talk to former participants, and see how courses they joined play a part in their lives.

This course has helped me a lot to boost my self-esteem and my confidence level. It has helped me to understand my strength and weaknesses. I am inspired now with a “can-do” attitude and I am happy that I could make this far above all.

A participant in the Second Chance programme, sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club

During hiking and kayaking sessions, it was really necessary to have everyone together; someone in the front look for the right path, someone at the back to take care of the whole team. When someone fell there was someone to lift him/her up, and when someone was not feeling okay everyone in the team waited until him/her got better. It felt so satisfying when we reached the hilltop and shared the beautiful moments together.

A participant in the Catalyst programme, sponsored by the Lee Hysan Foundation

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Programme Evaluation

Jeremy Young

Clarence Chan

Mojie
How Jeremy Young Started His Transformative Experience With Outward Bound

Jeremy Young is District Councillor of the Central and Western District. He is the Vice Chairperson of the Food, Environment, Hygiene & Works Committee and a Member of the Culture, Leisure & Social Affairs Committee under the Central and Western District Council, he is also a member of the Hong Kong Youth Development Commission.

Outward Bound: First Attempt and Family Tradition

Jeremy Young can be described as a die-hard fan of Outward Bound Hong Kong. He has been actively involved with Outward Bound since his first experience with it in 1982, but story between his family and the school began almost a decade earlier.

Jeremy’s dad, Howard Young, was on the first Outward Bound programme (Course #1) in Hong Kong and strived to keep up with the name of an “Outward Bounder”. Howard described the programme as a strenuous one consisting of tough outdoor physical activities designed to help young people discover and develop their potential. His Outward Bound story did not end with his participation in Course #1. He went on to sit in the LegCo and co-founded the name of an “Outward Bander”.

Jeremy vividly remembers the first time he started his Outward Bound journey. There was no air-conditioning, hot water for showers, not even a can of soft drink. Instead, a range of new experiences was brought onto him and he spent a week outdoors - hiking, canoeing, orienteering, exploring, stargazing, and dreaming. During the week, he intently focused on his surroundings - foraged edible plants, velvety moss, myriad bird songs, shifting clouds and more. Being immersed in the elements of nature forced him out of his comfort zone. Feeling the rain soaking through his clothes, reading the wind whilst paddling canoes, understanding the change in temperatures between day and night. “Everything was new and unknown to me, it was tough, but exciting at the same time.”

“Outward Bound is part of my journey and it leaves a lasting imprint on our family.”

“I admit I was homesick at times and wanted to cry at night, but when I heard my teammates sobbing in bed, I put up a brave face and comforted them instead” says Jeremy. The outdoor learning experience created plenty of conversations and interactions with others and he developed strong relationships with course mates. To this day he sees natural challenges as one of the most powerful tools for teaching. “I will send all my daughters to Outward Bound Hong Kong so that they too can learn and grow in a safe and natural environment, in fact, our eldest daughter, aged 9, has just completed a 4Kidz programme in July” Jeremy added.

Witness Participant’s Personal Growth

The jetty jump is Outward Bound’s signature challenge. “If you do it jump off the jetty - looks simple and easy right? But it is often the biggest challenge for many,” he explained. After high school, Jeremy was a volunteer at an Outward Bound 4Kidz programme. “There is one particular boy that I will never forget. He was very timid and afraid of water as he had experienced a near-drowning incident when he was a toddler. The jetty jump became his single biggest fear factor and he even begged with tears to be excused (of course he was not excused). The instructor, together with his teammates were patient yet persistent in urging him to break through, and after many failed attempts he finally made it (with a gentle ‘nudge’ from a volunteer standing next to him)! In that instant I knew he broke through, because the boy with a screaming smile on his face coming out of the water was virtually unrecognizable to the fearful crying one who took the leap moments ago. From that moment on he just took off and had a blast.” It gives me a lot of pride and joy having played a part in such a positive transformation for that young man.

Growth is Contagious When Working Together

After the jetty jump transformation, this boy went on to help others achieve their breakthroughs. On one particular challenging team rock-climbing session, a participant who was normally confident confessed she had a fear of heights and was absolutely convinced she would fail. The moment came when the jetty jump boy walked up to his frightful teammate and said “Remember how I was afraid of water and turned out just fine? If I can rid my fear of water, so can you in ridding your fear of heights. Needless to say, she stepped up and finished the challenge.” Jeremy believes Outward Bound is both a personal and a peer experience, that a single achievement, no matter how small, can send ripples through a group to further motivate others. “That is the beauty of the unknown, throwing yourself out there and coming out of the journey stronger.”

For more stories:

Mojie is a newly-retired woman who stepped up to challenge the offshore 15-day “Sail to Taiwan” journey. She shares with us her journey of self-discovery and adventure.

Clarence is a former participant of an 18-day course in 2014 who made his return to Outward Bound in the Sail to Taiwan journey. Read on to learn more about his story of transformation.
The Pedal Power Student Leader Programme has offered our students an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to try new things and challenge themselves.

During the programme, our students were able to boost their self-confidence through the tasks they are assigned to and the challenges they faced. Some of them had been more passive and less willing to take up responsibilities. With the help of the programme instructors, they gained more courage to face difficulties squarely and learned to solve problems as a team. Also, our students learned to cater for others’ needs and respect others’ opinions. Sharing the same tents and working together for a few days, they had to take care of each other and listened to others’ opinions in order to successfully complete their assigned tasks, which is certainly an essential skill they need to acquire to succeed in the future.

Principal of Pok Oi Hospital Chan Kai Memorial College

The Student Leader Programme is extremely outstanding. Within the five days of training, the instructors delivered the training aims and objectives in a comfortable and open atmosphere, in which students were not intimidated and were full of confidence to deal with the multiple tasks. The leadership training programme gave students the tools to turn the complex problems into opportunities for positive changes, helping them to think with different views. The programme provided to our students has made a definite improvement in their attitudes and behaviors, so that they are becoming mature students indeed. The behavior that this programme taught them will be a benefit to the personal character of the students too. Students are becoming more responsible for initiating and perpetuating this kind of action.

Principal of T.W.G.Hs Yow Kam Yuen College
A ship in harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.

William Shedd
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