



Sailing & Practical Skills Training for young people



The project aimed to provide a sail training experience for about 54 young people from inner city or deprived areas.

We sought to work in partnership with groups who had an ongoing relationship with the young people. Such groups would provide an adult leader and in this way a benefit would be achieved which would last long beyond the 5 days of the sailing cruise.

PROJECT REPORT

9 Cruises were run under the project. And about 70 people benefited. Cruises lasted 5 days and included circumnavigation of Mull or visiting Colonsay, Oronsay and Sailing round Jura. Wind and weather determined the destinations as the aim was to ensure that everyone enjoyed the cruise no matter what the conditions

Sailing through the Gulf of Corrievreckan was popular as were visits to Tobermory and sightings of porpoise dolphins and sharks.

One young crew from Wester Hailes in Edinburgh debated the reality of Balamory, it seemed that there was a rumour that it was really just another name for Tobermory. They were delighted to meet PC Plum and Josey Jump in the High Street and have a photograph taken with them.



Westward Quest Ltd Ardara, Clachan Seil, Oban PA34 4TL.

Phone/Fax: 01852 300 379 Mobile: 07919 80 80 98 E-mail: Rob@westwardquest.co.uk www.westwardquest.co.uk



Of course it's Balamory

Some were passionate about fishing. A young man who suffers from Aspergers Syndrome fed his crew with Mackerel. While another cruise dined on red mullet and Pollock.

Young people referred to us by Stramash enjoyed a cruise to Loch Sunart for a 2 boat mussel feast. Strong winds did not prevent a comfortable Cruise.

Participants came from all over Scotland and included a group from a drug rehabilitation programme, young carers, groups working with children and churches supporting people on low income. We were able support children with behavioural problems.

Some children were not used to sitting down for meals with others and benefited learn this social skill as well as sharing in cooking, cleaning and ships routine.



The Benefits

3



Sail training is known to benefit individuals and through this the communities from which they come.

During a cruise participants learn to work as a team, gain confidence, self esteem, and learn new life skills.. Valuable social interaction and Leadership skills are developed which will benefit the community.



“Learning is experiential. Operating in these environments under varying levels of stress develops individuals’ ability to interact with a group through the following:

- providing opportunities for developing communication skills,
- being offered and accepting leadership roles,
- becoming a member of a team with clear goals and tasks,
- gaining respect for others through participation in the program, and
- developing friendships.” (1)



Recently the largest and most wide-ranging study of sail training to date: (“The Characteristics and Value of the Sail Training Experience”, University of Edinburgh, June 2007: (2)

concluded that young trainees who participate in off-shore sail training programmes show measurable improvements in social confidence and their ability to work with others and the benefits are sustained over time after the voyage experience. (2)



- Other learning benefits include
- Literacy and numeracy while navigating and maintaining the ship’s log
 - Engineering / mechanics from maintenance of the ship’s systems
 - Environmental studies – the ‘carbon footprint of the vessel’
 - The bio-diversity of the marine environment
 - Heritage and history: exploration, trade and warfare through the use of sailing ships
 - Astronomy – the effect of the sun and the moon on tides
 - Nutrition – menu planning and food preparation
 - Physics – how the sails harness the energy of the wind to drive the vessel
 - Meteorology

Horizons are broadened and passion grows. (3)

“Passionate young people benefit communities” (4)



The small group dynamic on board a yacht provides a benevolent family atmosphere which can be very supportive and therapeutic for young people.

These findings are born out by our feedback from these events, which are presented in the origin of participants and their families or leaders.

References

1. [Living at sea: learning from communal life aboard sail training vessels](#)
Ken McCulloch
Ethnography and Education, 1745-7831, Volume 2, Issue 3, 2007, Pages 289 – 303
2. ("The Characteristics and Value of the Sail Training Experience", University of Edinburgh, June 2007:
3. (Patterson 1972 *in* Ewert 1989).
4. [TedxYouth @ Tampa Bay](#)



Effect of the project



5

Results



We have had the following feedback from participants:

- One 13 year old young man told me he was excited and inspired by seeing the stars so brightly and Milky Way, he hadn't ever been in such a dark place and loved the experience of being close to nature. He has never been on a family holiday. His grandmother said he had seen things she will never see in her life.
- One 15 year old young woman was full of stories after coming home and loved the experience, it built up her confidence and her mum was glad she'd joined in something as before this she had not been joining in anything

- One email said:

"it was a great experience to go sailing with u as i have never done it before."

- Three young people presented the week to an audience of 100 at a youth gathering designed to share the young peoples' projects over the summer. The Sailing presentation contained photos and a daily report of what took place over the week. There was a clear demonstration of the shared experience and a good feeling among the group. There were references to the Islands visited, mention of places that early Christians had worshiped, activities on deck, parts of the boat, and games played on board and on land! It showed appreciation of the skipper and his skills, it also pointed out that they learned "you can't just tuck into anything you like to eat without checking first." An important lesson on a carefully planned menu!

- The things I've learned, particularly about Celtic history, are not going to waste! They affect my outlook on life and will therefore affect everyone with whom I come into contact. (Kirsten)

Feedback



A group of young carers were supported by a cruise and the feedback from their leaders follows verbatim.

The sailing experience was very beneficial to the young people for many reasons. They all learned valuable interpersonal skills and some of the challenges increased their self-esteem and confidence.

2. We believe that the wider community will benefit from the fact that these young people are more positive about their achievements and confident in their abilities to work in a team.

3. We would be delighted to work with you again in the future and will try to find funding for this too.

4. We don't think there is anything that Westward Quest could have done better.

5. Each young person has their individual story of how the cruise helped them but they have built very strong friendships with each other and have positive memories that will hopefully last forever. For example, one young person has always been scared of swimming in the sea but managed to overcome this with support from others and now feels more confident to face future fears and challenges.

We would like to thank you very much for your dedication, enthusiasm and patience and wish you all the best with your valuable work in the future. (Argyll and Bute young carers.)

All participants learnt new sailing skills. They increased their appreciation of wild life, natural beauty, and the environment. They enjoyed exploring islands and learning about life on the sea.

Where do we go next



They learnt to live and work together in a harmonious way.

Three girls who could not relate to each other and were making poor progress with a psychologist learnt to work as a team and communicate. They and others learned to communicate without resorting to screaming and shouting

Several young people gained RYA Certificates. Leaders have been encouraged and supported. One young person said it was the best time ever in his life. Some will go on to further qualifications.



We have already had enquiries from Stramash , a Drug rehab group, an autistic support organisation as well as this years participants requesting that we do it again next year.

That will only be possible if we can find funding.



Westward Quest wishes to increase its work to encourage more young people. We need to find more people who share our objectives, have skills in fund raising or sailing that would like to help us build on this year. **Ideally we would like support for a salary to employ a full time worker.**

We have a volunteer Skipper who works with us on a freelance fee basis. His participation in this programme has been excellent. He has all the necessary skills to work for us full time or 50% time but we would need to support him with a salary.

These are our challenges.





North Argyll Carers Centre Ltd

**North Argyll Carers Centre
Albany Street
Oban
Argyll
PA34 4AL
01631 564 422
info@northargyllcarers.org.uk**

14 September 2010

Mr R Rae
Westward Quest Ltd
Ardara
Clachan Seil
Oban

Dear Robert

Testimonial

I managed to take a group of six young carers aged 12-18 on one of your youth cruises in August this year, thanks to the bursary made available, and was very impressed by every aspect of the course. All the young people benefited immensely from the confidence building and team building as well as the positive environment and respite from their caring responsibilities, which are increased during school holidays.

I am reminded every week at the after-school club of the positive effect the sailing trip had on the young people's self-esteem and attitude to challenges. Not only have they strengthened their friendships with each other but they have gained many happy memories which they clearly enjoy sharing with others. Two of the young people have even said that it was the best thing they have ever done and so we hope to work with you again in the future.

We are a small charitable project and these young people would not have had this advantage without the financial assistance so we are very grateful for the opportunity and for the efforts made by Westward Quest to ensure the highest quality of service for our young people.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Joyce
North Argyll Young Carers Project

Links and Further Reading



L

Resources on the web

www.westwardquest.co.uk

www.asto.org.uk

www.rya.org.uk

Books and magazines

Don't forget to look at our
website!
www.westwardquest.co.uk

The W Q Team



Who are we?

The executive:

Robert Rae Yachtmaster Instructor

Paul van Gardingen

Dr Neil Schofield Outdoor mountain and Sea Leader

Skippers:

Don Gunton Staff Skipper

Mike Bowley Staff Skipper

Where are we?

We have moorings on the Isle of Seil and Crinan South harbour

Office Westward Quest Ardara, Clachan Seil, Oban PA34 4TL 01852 300379



Robert

Robert Rae Director of Westward Quest and Principal of the RYA Recognised Training Centre.

Sailing instructor

First aid and VHF instructor

Sometimes called Skipstar



Paul

Paul van Gardingen

Professor UNESCO Chair of International

Development Yachtmaster, Diver Travels the world

Sometimes called the KiwiProf



Neil

Runs Sail Forth Drascomb cruising

Coastal skipper

Mountain leader Scientist

Sometimes called "Great Skip"

Don Gunton

Skipper and YM Instructor

Looks after Alcuin

Nikki

Day Skipper Mate and Marketing assistant

Maura

Purser and disability advisor.

