

# Changing lives through challenging experiences

**"For the first time in my life  
I felt bigger and stronger  
than anything that could  
stand in my way."**

Young Explorer



**"I learned not to underestimate myself and the abilities I have the potential to develop..."**

Young Explorer



## BE A PART OF OUR JOURNEY

British Exploring Society is a world class youth development charity with a unique heritage, founded on the belief that challenging experiences can change lives, empowering and equipping young people with the courage, skills, resilience and determination to make the most of their future.

We prepare and take young people on expeditions to remote locations where they face challenges, gain skills and learn about themselves - as well as acquiring knowledge relevant to their lives and to the fragile environments that they explore.

**The results are transformative – not just in terms of practical skills and resilience, but in a new-found confidence and self-belief which they carry forward to their future life.**

More than this, through their adventure together, our young people forge friendships for life and become part of a unique, supportive and continuing community of explorers with shared experiences, values and perceptions of the world.

**"Wow!  
What an expedition.  
This has undoubtedly been  
the best 5 weeks of my life."**

Young Explorer



## LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES FOR BETTER FUTURES

We develop confidence, resilience and life-skills in the young people we support, through challenging wilderness exploration. Young people are at the heart of everything we do. To deliver our vision of changing lives through challenging experiences, we reach out to communities where our programmes can make the most difference, and work to ensure that we include and represent young people from every area of society.

**"Our programmes benefit all young people. We place a specific focus on those who are marginalised – from areas of economic deprivation, with low educational and employment prospects, who face multiple personal, emotional and social challenges. These young people will be less likely to secure stable work, stable homes and stable relationships without intervention."**

**Honor Wilson-Fletcher,**  
Chief Executive, British Exploring Society

Our youth development model works well for young people lacking strong role models, exhibiting high-risk behaviours or low self-esteem. Most will be experiencing disrupted living (family breakdown, bereavement of a family member, a parent or sibling in prison). Many struggle with confidence issues which, if not tackled at an early stage, can lead to more severe problems in later life.

**57% of young people on our partner programmes have special educational needs\***

**68% of young people feel they are ill prepared for the workforce\*\***

**90% of schools do not provide any form of outdoor learning\*\*\***

**95% of young people return to education or find employment after a BES programme\***

**78% of those we support have or have experienced mental health problems\***

**61% of our young people have experienced significant disruption in their living circumstances\***

\*Participants on our DNG programme 2017

\*\*Sutton Trust 2011

\*\*\*National Trust 'Natural Childhood' report, 2017



**“This is my first job ever and it would have never happened if I didn’t complete this programme. My life has transformed.”**

Becky

## A REAL DIFFERENCE – FOR LIFE

### MEET BECKY (now aged 21)

**“I wasn’t the best-behaved child in the world. I’ve got an older brother who is disabled and required full attention. I was also an attention seeking child and got physically abused by both of my parents when I was five years old.**

My parents left me at my aunt’s where I spent another two years before Social Services found out. Since that day I went through 25 foster placements. I found it challenging to be around other children. I wanted to be the centre of attention and always come first. As soon as things got tough, my foster parents picked up the phone and next day I was placed elsewhere. I completely lost trust in adults and the more rejection I had to face, the worse I behaved.

Everything changed when I met my Key Worker at Catch22 who told me about British Exploring Society. When I arrived at Wolverhampton, I wanted to go home. I was scared of new people and didn’t want to sleep in the tent with someone I didn’t know. I was beyond my comfort zone. I stayed the entire weekend and I was so proud of myself! I thought, ‘If I could do this, I could definitely do more!’ and I did!

**After my expedition, I told my Key Worker that I wanted to do more in my life. I applied for an apprenticeship programme and got offered a job!”**

Becky



## WHO WE HELP

Our drive to provide greater access to programmes to marginalised young people through targeted recruitment and working in partnership, is already yielding results. In 2017, participants on our expeditions included:

- 19% from the top 6% most deprived communities in England (and increasing year-on-year)
- 20% from BAME (black and minority ethnic) communities – double the number in 2016 (According to Office of National Statistics; average inclusion in the UK is 16%)

We supported participants on those expeditions focused on working with marginalised and disadvantaged groups who were dealing with the following range of issues – several with more than one:

- 56.5% with special educational needs
- 25% with caring responsibilities
- 65% with substance misuse or dependency issues
- 61% experiencing significant disruption in their living circumstances
- 52% accessing alternative education whilst engaged in the programme

**“The British Exploring Society programme helps young people develop true life skills, from the practical elements like taking care of themselves and staying safe, to softer skills like learning to be resilient, to be a team player. It also boosts confidence and self-worth, sadly a factor lots of young people I work with lack.”**

**Zygmunt Dreja,**  
Support worker at EPIC-CIC



**"My expedition was the most challenging, exhilarating, fascinating and mind-broadening experience I have ever had. It was all that I hoped for and more."**

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## HOW OUR APPROACH WORKS

British Exploring Society runs a number of year-long programmes\* for young people from across the UK, following a three phase model:

### **The first phase delivers residential training in the UK**

This builds trust, and is the start of the journey for our young people – it includes the practical skills needed for expedition such as putting up a tent, first aid and navigation, but also more social skills and learning about personal care, hygiene, healthy relationships and basic cooking.

### **The second phase takes place overseas in a genuinely wild and remote location**

British Exploring Society has run programmes on all seven continents, in arctic, desert, jungle and mountain regions – all to deliver the same distinctive outcomes. Participants, supported by high ratios of specialist leaders, establish a basecamp and take on challenges together, learning about themselves, each other and the environment whilst removed from the norms of their day-to-day lives. The overseas element lasts between 3-5 weeks.

### **The third phase of the programme focuses on young peoples future**

Participants are brought together again to translate their experiences into day-to-day life in ways which can be understood and appreciated by employers and educational establishments. They consider their next steps, and reaffirm their bonds of friendship with their fellow explorers.

**Our model supports sustainable improvement in confidence and maturity, self-worth and resilience in all young people, and better progression to employment, further education and training.**

We help young people overcome the impact of disadvantage, trauma and fractured childhoods. We provide intensive support and give young people the chance to understand their capabilities, and to develop resilience and self-agency. This gives them motivation and the skills to develop new and better relationships – and in turn, to move forward in their learning, work and life.

\*Based on a typical partnership programme where we work with youth referral services.



**"I feel I learnt valuable skills and am now in a position to go on to do an awful lot more than I would otherwise have been able to"**

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## THE DIFFERENCE FOR EACH YOUNG PERSON

**Each expedition programme has two key objectives:**

### Objective one

To build confidence, self-esteem and self-worth in young people who are at recognised statistical risk of poor outcomes due to the lack of stability and experiences during their childhoods.

### Objective two

To help young people progress into meaningful education or employment, teaching them skills for life (like improved judgement and effective decision-making) that will significantly improve their chances of employment or educational attainment.

- Each and every young person measures their own personal development using our outcomes compass - key improvements are proven in:
- Ability to make decisions
- Managing their feelings
- Motivation
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Teamwork and leadership
- Emotional intelligence
- Resilience
- Confidence and feelings of self-worth

## A REAL DIFFERENCE – FOR LIFE MEET LUKE **Aged 18**

Luke was diagnosed as Selective Mute.

He would refuse to speak to anyone other than his key worker at his youth service, Catch 22, and would only speak to immediate family outside of the service. He had extreme social anxiety and rejected new situations entirely. Luke's progress has been considerable throughout the process with British Exploring Society, both in terms of his social skills and his body language.

Since his expedition, Luke has successfully completed his GCSE English, and Level 2 Maths, and has a friendship circle at Catch 22. He has since completed a week-long programme with the local Fire Service and has successfully gained employment there.

**"Luke has a friendship circle at Catch 22 - you will frequently find the 4 of them giggling and messing about together in free time, which is a very lovely thing indeed."**

Phil Meek, Support worker at our partner Catch 22

**95% progress to education or employment within 3 months\***

**100% say their confidence has improved\*\***

\*Refers to DNG programme for young people classified at NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) \*\*Reflects feedback from all Young Explorers in 2017.



**“British Exploring Society gives young people the opportunity to learn that they are stronger than they ever believed.”**

Phil Meek, Support worker at our partner Catch 22

# HOW YOU CAN HELP A YOUNG PERSON

## British Exploring Society Patrons

Many of the young people who would most benefit from our work lack the significant financial resources necessary to participate. They have been excluded from opportunities throughout their childhood for similar reasons. Our patrons remove this barrier.

By joining a community of generous supporters, we can help more young people build their confidence, understand and develop their potential and secure themselves a more positive future.

## Recognising your support - becoming part of our community

All Patrons make an outstanding contribution to the life of British Exploring Society beneficiaries. As a patron, we will ensure that there are opportunities for you to meet with and hear from the young people you support – and from the people who support them, too – like their leaders and youth workers.

You can therefore appreciate for yourself the significant difference your contribution has made in their lives. We will also recognise your support in the following ways:

- Regular personal updates from our CEO, on key strategic developments
- Regular reports, which capture and communicate the impact of your support through the experiences and feedback of the young people you have helped
- Recognition in published materials, including our Annual Report
- An invitation to British Exploring Society events including our annual celebration evening, providing the opportunity to meet others who share your enthusiasm and commitment to our work
- An invitation to phase three of our programmes - Focus on the Future, in the UK

You could also meet like-minded individuals through our development board.





## PLEASE HELP TRANSFORM A YOUNG LIFE TODAY

British Exploring Society patrons programme has been established to ensure we can transform more young lives. We very much hope you will consider joining this special group of British Exploring Society supporters and we look forward to welcoming you to our community.

### **BRONZE PATRONS** **£1,000+**

£1,000 could enable two young people to experience a British Exploring Society programme, who otherwise wouldn't be able to. Through volunteering in their community, the young person could 'earn' a bursary of £500 towards their expedition.

### **SILVER PATRONS** **£2,500+**

£2,850 could provide vital training for 10 doctors to become medical leaders on expeditions

### **GOLD PATRONS** **£5,000+**

£5,000 could build confidence and life skills of 50 young people not in education or employment, through taking part in the UK residential training.



“This has been life-changing for my son. The young man we picked up at the airport was so different from the one we dropped off – so confident, mature, content and proud.”

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about British Exploring Society or would like to meet the team please get in contact:

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