

Getting started in the Outdoors with the John Muir Award – a case study

The Prince's Trust

▶ Coming to Outward Bound® is a building block in the lives of the young people we support. The positive experience that they and our staff gain is invaluable to our work. To witness young people take on a challenge, see it through to the end and achieve a sense of completion and pride is so worthwhile and inspiring. The Outward Bound Trust and the John Muir Award have brought a quality to our programmes that is both unique and priceless. ◀



Marguerite Doherty, Get Started Programme Executive

Fact box

Organisation	The Prince's Trust	Number of young people in organisation	4,154 (Scotland wide)
Location	Glasgow	Age group	14-25 yr olds not in education, training or employment

Organisation background

The Prince's Trust is a national charity that offers support to young people aged 14-25 who are not in education, employment or training. The Trust offers a wide range of courses with the combined goals of getting young people to realise their potential and get their lives working again – through further training, work, volunteering or education.

The core client groups include young people in or leaving care, facing challenges in education or having been in trouble with the law, and lone parents. A common thread is that all of the young people are unemployed at the time and often not engaged in any constructive or positive activity.

Reasons for selecting this bespoke programme

The combination of Outward Bound's knowledge and expertise in the development of young people and the John Muir Award's focus on environmental awareness and building an understanding of the world around us made this course a clear choice. The bespoke programme gives young people an opportunity to develop new skills and to learn more about themselves as they try new activities and overcome new challenges, and explore some of the most beautiful places in Scotland.

The John Muir Award fits in well with the aims of developing respect for the environment and each other. It brings a valuable and achievable award within the reach of participants. For many this could be the first award they have ever worked towards and completed, giving a great sense of achievement and personal value.



Adventures for life

The Outward Bound Trust's courses offered to young people through the Prince's Trust Scotland are optional, so a final important factor is that they are enjoyable – the instructors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and show a real commitment to seeing young people challenge themselves and succeed. The obvious benefits of each course, and the positive feedback we receive, ensure that more young people are keen to sign up for future courses.

Key outcomes identified by The Prince's Trust

Sustainable progression. The aim of Get Started programmes is to provide an entry route to positive outcomes and allow the young people access to education, employment and training by giving young people the tools they need to continue to make real and lasting changes in their lives.

Valued qualification. The John Muir Award is a recognised and valuable qualification, showing an ability to focus on the environment and related issues as part of a structured learning programme. This may be the only award some of our young people have ever achieved, giving it an additional value beyond the qualification itself.

Building self-esteem. The circumstances that many of our clients come from can have a seriously detrimental effect on their self-esteem. The experiences and successes that form part of an Outward Bound course provide a significant boost to the individuals' sense of self-worth and self-belief.

Shared goals. The Prince's Trust and The Outward Bound Trust share the goals of helping young people to develop, grow and achieve their full potential. Outward Bound's expertise in using the outdoors to deliver powerful learning outcomes as they work towards these goals adds real value to the overall work carried out by The Prince's Trust.

Positive environment. The instructors and staff at The Outward Bound Trust show real enthusiasm, professionalism and flexibility in the way they deal with all of our clients, creating a positive environment in which to learn and develop.

Participants' first hand experiences of wild places:

“The John Muir Award really helped me focus on what I wanted to do, the more certificates and Awards I collect, the better my job prospects will be.”

John Wilson, 18, Prince's Trust participant

“I loved being in the great outdoors and was amazed at the amount of work we completed in such a short space of time.”

Thomas McCormick, 17, Prince's Trust participant

“Allowing opportunity for young people to ‘get out there’ and gain new skills and experience. It is an extra challenge and certificate available, and a real sense of achievement.”

Jacqui Kennedy, Team Leader, The Prince's Trust

“Having the John Muir Trust recognise people's achievements through the John Muir Award gives legitimacy to young people engaging in outdoor activity. It is also a personal certificate recognising achievement, rather than a group certificate, which is important to a significant number of participants. With Outward Bound Metro, we offer participants the opportunity to see their immediate environment in a different way and, perhaps for the first time, think about taking responsibility for it.”

Steve MacKenzie, Deputy Head of Centre, Outward Bound Metro