



Rallying Together

A research study of Raleigh's work with disadvantaged young people

An ippr report for Raleigh International Trust

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Raleigh

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The report represents the views of the author and not necessarily those of ippr's directors or trustees.

Summary

In 2008, ippr was commissioned by Raleigh to research the long-term impact of Raleigh's work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This research had two key objectives:

1. To provide Raleigh with feedback on its work with disadvantaged young people over the past 25 years
2. To provide a case study of a practical intervention which has broader lessons for policymakers and practitioners concerned with improving young people's lives.

Raleigh and its 'venturers'

Raleigh is a youth development organisation that runs overseas expeditions for young people to work together on community, environmental and conservation projects around the world. The young people who participate in Raleigh expeditions, known as 'venturers', come through a number of different routes:

- 'Self-funders': young people from the UK who fundraise approximately £3000 to go on the expeditions
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK who fundraise for less money (usually around £500)
- Young people from the host countries, and international venturers.

Since 'Operation Raleigh' was founded in 1984, approximately 1600 of the young people who have accessed expeditions have come from disadvantaged backgrounds: around 10 per cent of all venturers. Many of these young people have come from communities that can be described as 'working class' or 'deprived' and have experienced a range of difficulties including unemployment, homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, mental illness and violence. The access routes for these venturers have undergone many changes over the past 25 years, in terms of the ethos, selection criteria, extent and nature of the support offered. Raleigh has also changed as an organisation: it is increasingly concerned with stimulating personal development through adventure while conducting sustainable community and environmental work internationally.

However, Raleigh continues to define its expeditions in relation to four challenges, stating these on its website (2008) as:

'The challenge to be selected; the challenge to fundraise; the expedition itself, and the challenge to make a difference locally when you come back'

Raleigh's work and the youth policy context

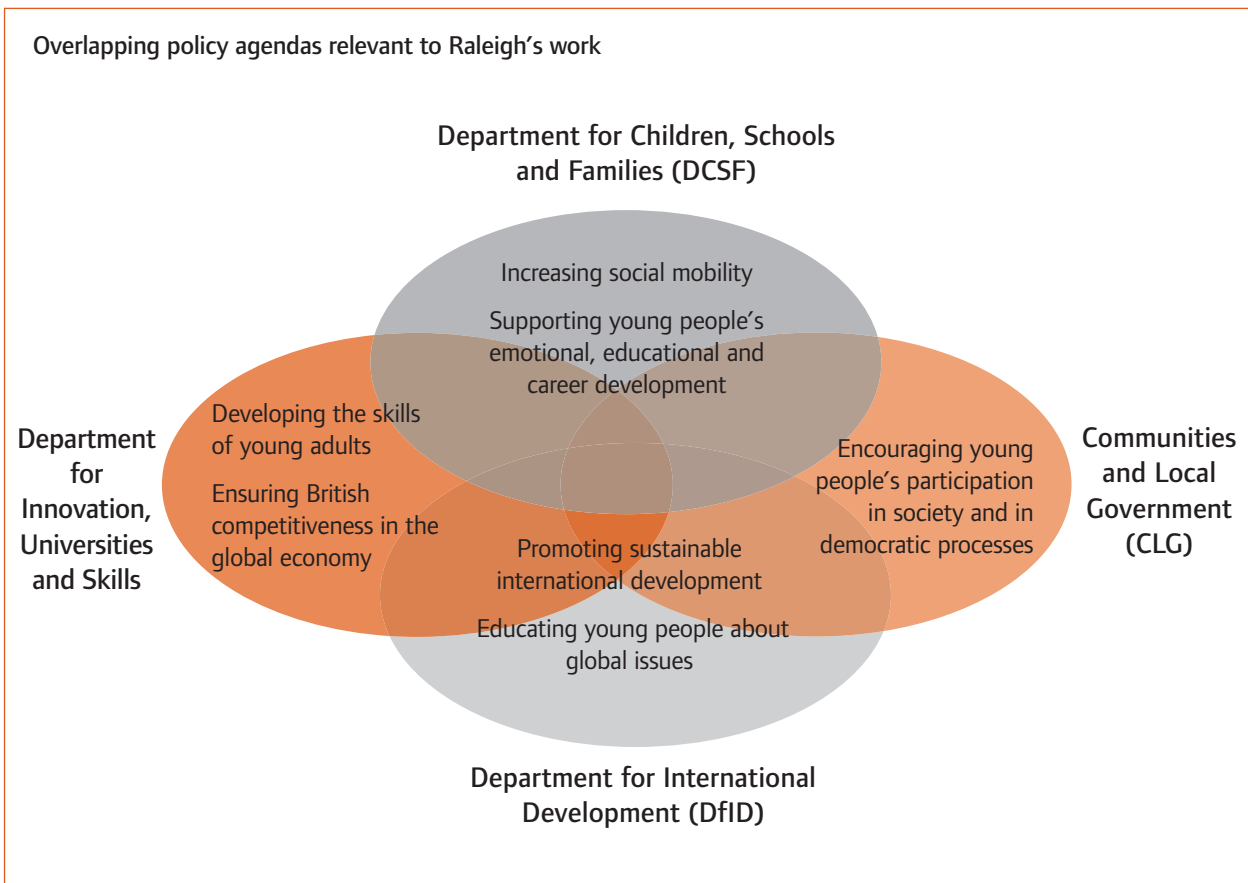
Raleigh's work with disadvantaged youth feeds into a number of overlapping youth policy agendas concerning different government departments (summarised in the diagram overleaf). These include:

- **Personal development:** Concern about wellbeing as well as attainment has grown to dominate youth agendas, as reflected in the Government's *Youth Matters Green Paper* (2005), *The Children's Plan* (2007) and the *Youth Taskforce Action Plan* (2008). The policy paper *Aiming High* (HM Treasury 2007) specifically promised extra funding for purposeful activities that are perceived to improve 'soft skills' and contribute to psychological development. The Department for Children, Schools and Families' growing emphasis on learning outside the classroom clearly relates to Raleigh's own emphasis on experiential learning.
- **Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness:** Encouraging tolerance and respect for diversity is an increasing political priority (Agegbo 2007). The *Leitch Review of*

"Raleigh is increasingly concerned with stimulating personal development through adventure while conducting sustainable community and environmental work internationally"

Skills directed policymakers to the need to equip young people with the skills they need in the global age (Leitch 2006), while policy support for education relating to international development is also growing (Young and Shah 2008). Through sending young people to developing countries, Raleigh explicitly aims to encourage young people to develop a sense of global citizenship and understanding of other cultures.

- **Civic participation:** Promoting volunteering and active citizenship among young people is a political priority for politicians across the political spectrum. The case for youth volunteering was made most explicitly by the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement (Russell 2005). David Cameron’s Conservatives have proposed a National Citizen Service for all 16-year-olds. Most recently, the Youth Citizenship Commission is ongoing and due to report in 2009. This ties in to Raleigh’s ‘fourth challenge’, which encourages young people to ‘make a difference back home’ after they return from their expedition. Raleigh aims to encourage these young people to make a difference in whatever community they end up in, but recognising that their experiences may lead them to look beyond that community.



What this research project set out to achieve

While there is a growing body of research exploring gap years and overseas expeditions, this has tended to focus on the experiences of young people from middle class socio-economic backgrounds. These fit the general stereotype of typical ‘gap year students’; they tend to be on clear educational and career trajectories and are relatively affluent. Our research asked how the experience of overseas expeditions differed for young people from less affluent backgrounds, many of whom were not in education or employment at the time that they became involved with Raleigh.

Existing research into volunteering has tended to ask people to evaluate their experiences soon after they volunteered. By returning to people who went on expeditions many years ago, our research was uniquely placed to understand the long-term role and significance of volunteering in people’s lives, too.

Our research set out to answer the following questions:

- What long-term influence has Raleigh had on the lives of people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have taken part in its expeditions over the past 25 years?
- In particular, what is the relationship between participating in Raleigh and:
 - a) Personal development
 - b) Global citizenship
 - c) Civic participation

Our research consisted of three main phases:

- 1) A review of existing research and an audit of the policy context
- 2) An online and postal self-completion survey of 105 past Raleigh participants from disadvantaged backgrounds who had gone on expeditions
- 3) Fifteen life history interviews with past Raleigh participants from disadvantaged backgrounds. These interviewees ranged in age from 22 to 40 and had gone on expeditions between 1989 and 2006.

In this summary we give an overview of the findings of phases two and three of our research under the headings ‘personal development’, ‘global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness’ and ‘civic participation’. We have structured our findings in this way in order to make them relevant both to Raleigh’s objectives and to the current policy and research context. We then draw out the implications of our research for Raleigh and for policymakers working across these different agendas.

We have used direct quotes from participants. These have been identified by interviewee/survey respondent code, gender and the year that they went on expedition.

Key findings from the research

Personal development

‘In brief it changed my life, it gave me the opportunity to explore who I was and where I wanted to be in life’ (Survey respondent no. 80, female, 2003)

- **Participants said that participating in Raleigh had transformed their lives.** 83 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh had a long-term impact on their personal development. This was particularly through enhancing their sense of wellbeing and their ability to cope with difficult things that happened to them. 79 per cent of respondents said that their sense of having control over their lives increased as a result of Raleigh.
- **The experience of being in an unfamiliar and extremely challenging environment was an important contributor to personal development.** 81 per cent of survey respondents said that being in a remote environment where it was necessary to be self-sufficient was a very important part of their overall experience. The challenging nature of the environment helped people to break away from destructive influences and patterns of behaviour in their home environments, broadened their horizons and enhanced their sense of achievement.
- **Mixing with UK venturers from different social backgrounds was an important part of the expedition.** Participants had both positive and negative experiences of this. 76 per cent of survey respondents said that being with people from backgrounds different from their own was an important part of the Raleigh experience. Some participants said that mixing with people from different social backgrounds challenged their preconceptions and raised their aspirations and self esteem. However, others found these relationships more difficult, with some of them feeling stigmatised for coming to Raleigh through a route for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“For one group, participating in Raleigh was an opportunity to explore and question their identity and social status in a way that raised their aspirations and self esteem”

“Some participants felt they had an affinity with people from the host communities because they shared experiences of coping with difficulties and disadvantage”

- The ways in which Raleigh impacted on participants’ personal development depended on the levels of social support and the opportunities they could draw on at home. 81 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh had increased the number of friendships they had with people from different backgrounds. However, some participants also said they experienced some difficulties in relating to people from their home communities after they returned from expedition.
- Participants said that their confidence and interpersonal skills were greatly increased as a result of their experience with Raleigh. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that their confidence in their own abilities increased as a result of participating. 89 per cent reported an increased ability to lead or encourage others and 87 per cent an increased ability to work as part of a team. There was therefore clear evidence that Raleigh helped participants improve both their team working and leadership skills.
- A very high proportion of survey respondents (83 per cent) said that Raleigh had increased their career ambitions. 83 per cent of participants reported increased interest in working in countries outside the UK and 75 per cent reported increased interest in working in youth or community work. The extent to which people translated this into specific employment outcomes varied according to their personal circumstances.
- The opportunity to mix with people who had been to university encouraged some participants to believe that they could succeed in higher education. Some participants reported becoming more aware of the benefits of further and higher education as a result of their Raleigh experience.
- The role that Raleigh played for people with drug and alcohol issues was highly dependent on individuals’ circumstances. A number of participants had previously experienced drug or alcohol dependency. Some of them said that Raleigh played an important role in helping them overcome these problems. Others among them felt that they needed more support before and during their expeditions in order to cope with the issues that this raised.
- Participants had mixed views on the level of adventure and risk to which they felt they should be exposed while on expedition. This was in part a reflection of the different backgrounds and experiences of the research participants. It also highlights the difficult balancing act that Raleigh must facilitate, in providing challenging opportunities while guaranteeing safety.

Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness

‘Raleigh opened my eyes and mind to the world around me and I can’t thank them enough’ (Survey respondent no. 103, male, 1994)

- Participants reported that Raleigh had greatly increased their awareness of the world and had broadened their horizons. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that their understanding of other people’s cultures and backgrounds had increased as a result of participating in Raleigh.
- 85 per cent of survey respondents said that participating in Raleigh had increased their awareness of inequality in the world. This particularly affected people’s attitudes towards consumerism, although in varying ways. Some participants said that they developed new appreciation of the material comforts available to them at home. Others said that their experience of visiting poor but happy communities made them more critical of materialistic culture in the UK.
- Participants described the host communities in complex ways. At times these conformed to known stereotypes of communities as ‘poor but happy’ or ‘needy and grateful’ but some accounts were more questioning and reflective. In cases where people were reflective about their relationships with the host communities,

this appeared to be linked to the strong personal relationship that they developed with host country participants and international venturers. More than eight in ten (83 per cent) of survey respondents said that spending time with people from the host community was a very important aspect of their expedition.

- **Many participants adopted notions of 'difference' that were rooted in social class rather than culture.** For example, some participants felt they had an affinity with people from the host communities because they shared experiences of coping with difficulties and disadvantage, while feeling very different from the 'posh' UK self-funders.
- **Participants' understandings of the host communities were based on their personal, subjective experiences.** For example, people identified commonalities between problems they found in the host communities and problems they had encountered in their own local communities.
- **Participants were interested in the overall organisation and sustainability of their projects.** Some said they would have liked to know more about the countries before they went there. A number said they would have liked more information about what happened to the projects and host communities in the long-term.
- **Most participants (86 per cent of survey respondents) said that Raleigh had impacted in the long term on their sense of identity and values.** However, participants tended not to use political or economic frameworks in explaining the problems they encountered.
- **Participants saw themselves as both volunteers and explorers.** At times, these two self-conceptions sat uncomfortably together. This may be a reflection of broader tensions between models of 'personal development' and the values of 'international development'.

Civic participation

'On return and at home it has opened my eyes. All I want to do is travel the world. My experience around the UK and other countries would be great for my local area but I want to travel further, gaining more knowledge and then pass it down to others who wish to follow or want to help others in remote countries' (Survey respondent no. 88, male, 2002)

- **Participating in Raleigh had a very strong impact on participants' attitudes towards others and their involvement in further volunteering.** Three quarters (73 per cent) reported their increased participation in volunteering activities as a result of their involvement with Raleigh. Participants also developed more philanthropic and altruistic attitudes towards other people who are less fortunate.
- **While many participants became involved in further volunteering, this was often not in their local community but further afield.** One explanation for this is that some people felt more distant from their local communities after returning from their expedition. But while some found this distancing difficult, others thought it was a positive development that demonstrated they were moving up in the world and broadening their horizons.
- **Participating in Raleigh had less of an impact on people's interest in politics or their involvement in political activities than on other aspects of their lives.** The terms 'citizenship' and 'community responsibility' did not hold resonance for participants, even though many were engaged in voluntary activities.
- **Those people who had been supported by Raleigh to get involved in further volunteering felt that this was extremely helpful.** The types of activities that participants valued included involvement in subsequent Raleigh fundraising and selection weekends and volunteering activities run by other organisations that were suggested by Raleigh.

Conclusions and implications for Raleigh

These findings lead us to a number of conclusions and recommendations, both for Raleigh as it looks to build on its good work in the future, and more broadly for policymakers concerned with improving the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our findings provide very positive feedback for Raleigh from the young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have taken part in its expeditions over the past 25 years:

- Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the role that Raleigh had played in improving all aspects of their lives.
- They reported that Raleigh had helped them develop, on a personal level in relation to their education and career, and in terms of their global awareness.
- Participants expressed a great deal of good feeling towards Raleigh and asked us to pass on their thanks to Raleigh staff.

Below we highlight some key implications for Raleigh as the organisation looks to the future.

Raleigh should continue to encourage constructive relationships between young people from different social backgrounds. In order to facilitate this:

- Raleigh should continue to be open and transparent with young people about the routes that people have taken to get on an expedition.
- If funding allows it could try to increase the proportion of venturers who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- If funding allows it could try to increase the number of volunteer staff who had originally got involved with Raleigh through its routes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Raleigh should continue to negotiate the difficult balance between providing opportunities to young people who may have experienced complex difficulties and ensuring safety 'on the ground':

- Raleigh's role in providing these opportunities to young people who would not normally have them is really valuable and important.
- Raleigh should continue to ensure that potential venturers are assessed by a relevant professional.
- Young people who have recently experienced drug, alcohol or mental health issues may require specialist support, before, during and after their expedition.

Providing ongoing support to participants after they return from expedition:

- The extent to which participants were able to build on their experiences from the expeditions depended on the support and opportunities available to them after they returned home.
- Participants who had received post-expedition support from Raleigh were positive about this.
- Ongoing support with the difficult post-expedition transition process was one of the few areas in which some participants said that they would have liked Raleigh to do more.

Opportunities for further learning:

- Some participants would have appreciated an educational programme, both before and after the expedition, that could help them build on the insights they developed while on expedition.
- Participants would also have liked more opportunities to stay in touch with people from the host communities and learn about what happened to their projects in the long term.

The role of partner organisations:

- Our findings suggest there is an important role for partner organisations currently involved in Raleigh’s Youth Agency Partnership Programme (YAPP). The more understanding and insight that these organisations have of the Raleigh experience, the better placed they will be to support the young people who take part and help them build on their experience.

Conclusions and implications for policymakers and other relevant organisations

The Raleigh expedition is a ‘positive activity’ of the kind identified by policymakers as promoting personal development:

- Its positive attributes include the fact it is focused, goal orientated, takes place in a group setting and is supervised. Previous research has identified these as critical factors of activities that are beneficial for personal development.
- The Raleigh experience helps to build aspects of self-esteem that the educational establishment is coming to recognise as crucial to success.
- Our findings highlight the value of experiential learning through expeditions. As such they support the current focus of education and youth policy on the importance of learning outside of the classroom.

The importance of international experiences for personal development:

- The unfamiliar and challenging nature of the expedition locations was an extremely important aspect of participants’ experience: being somewhere which is culturally unfamiliar and is physically and mentally challenging enhanced their development and learning, and being far away from their home environment broadened participants’ perspectives and helped them leave behind any destructive influences back home.
- Participants viewed their Raleigh experience as an opportunity to volunteer, explore and learn rather than as a holiday.
- There can be tension between the role of developing communities as sites for learning and the needs of those communities.

“The unfamiliar and challenging nature of the expedition locations was an extremely important aspect of participants’ experience”

One-off interventions need to be linked to longer-term support:

- Policymakers need to consider the ways in which shorter-term interventions and longer-term youth services can complement each other.
- Policymakers should seek to develop policy that is responsive to the differing, long-term trajectories of young people. More cross-department working is necessary to support this. This includes considering how best to fund longer-term and shorter-term interventions in sustainable ways.
- Policymakers and practitioners should ensure that shorter-term interventions are closely linked with careers services, youth services, employment services and employers.
- Organisations running shorter-term interventions should support young people to maintain new relationships that they develop as a result. This might be through encouraging peer support networks or organising follow-up events.
- As Raleigh has demonstrated, organisations running shorter-term interventions that are highly valued and trusted by young people may be uniquely placed to help those young people access other services and sources of support.

Learning about poverty, social inequality and sustainable development:

Our findings have particular implications for organisations concerned with education about international development and social justice issues. In particular:

- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can draw on their personal experience to learn about issues facing communities around the world.

- In order to link their experiences overseas with broader global issues, young people can benefit from an educational approach that helps them to learn about historical, political and economic contexts and about development issues.

The relationship between international volunteering and local community participation:

- Our research provided evidence of one way in which policy agendas promoting social mobility and those promoting strong local communities can pull young people in two different directions.
- Policymakers and providers who want to use overseas volunteering in order to stimulate interest in local community participation need to involve local community groups in their schemes.

Altruism and philanthropy, not politics or 'citizenship':

- Our findings have highlighted that policymakers' language about citizenship and volunteering does not resonate with some members of the public (although it is important to note that many of our participants went to school prior to the introduction of the citizenship curriculum).
- They also provide an example of a broader trend whereby volunteering is seen as a philanthropic – not a political – activity.

The relationship between 'international development' and 'personal development':

- There is a difficult balance to strike between the needs of the young venturers and those of the host communities. Policymakers working across these areas need to communicate how best to balance their different objectives.
- Policymakers and providers need to ensure that projects and activities in host communities are wanted by people in those communities as well as being sustainable and genuinely contributing to productive outcomes.
- There is scope for further analysis of the ways that models of 'international development', 'community development' and 'personal development' relate to each other.

Implications for assessing youth interventions:

- It is important that 'outcomes' of youth interventions are measured in ways that reflect the ongoing nature of the people's educational and personal development.
- While Raleigh's work is clearly relevant to a range of policy agendas, it is also important to highlight the intrinsically valuable nature of the experience for the young people who take part:

'That kind of memory, the memory of the freedom, great – it's nice, it's something I can always hold [on to] and it's something that no one else can ever understand 'cause it's mine'
(Interviewee A, male, 2002)

1. Introduction

This report is the culmination of research commissioned by Raleigh and undertaken by ippr to explore Raleigh's work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. ippr was asked to examine:

- the size, scale and value of the impact that Raleigh has had on the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have taken part in its programmes
- the ability of Raleigh to impact on people across all socio-economic classes and the value of the Raleigh experience to society.

The scope of this report is to inform Raleigh about its role in people's lives over the past 25 years and also to inform policymakers and practitioners who are concerned with improving the lives of young people. In order to achieve this, we have taken an historical approach, gathering information from people who went on their expedition up to 19 years ago. We have also adopted a broad and wide-ranging approach in understanding Raleigh's role rather than focusing solely on Raleigh's stated objectives. Our intention in doing so is not to judge the Raleigh of 2008 against historical values, objectives or ways of working. Rather, our aim is to provide broader insights that are relevant to people concerned with youth development as they look to the future.

About Raleigh

Raleigh runs 10-week expeditions for young people to work together on projects around the world, generally in low income countries. The expeditions are structured in three parts, with participants undertaking one community service project, one environmental conservation project and one adventure project.

The young people who participate in Raleigh expeditions are known as 'venturers'. Raleigh venturers fall into a number of different categories:

- 'Self-funders': young people from the UK who fundraise approximately £3000 for the charity in order to go on their expedition
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK who have been recruited on to expeditions via different routes including: Operation Raleigh Inner City Scheme (ORICS), the Youth Development Programme (YDP), Motive8, and the Youth Agency Partnership Programme (YAPP). These young people need to fundraise a smaller amount of money (usually around £500)
- Venturers from the host countries and international venturers.

Raleigh has records for approximately 1600 young people who have accessed expeditions via the Inner City Scheme, the Youth Development Programme, Motive8 and YAPP. This is approximately 10 per cent of all Raleigh venturers. **Our research focuses specifically on the experiences of these young people.**

The objectives of Raleigh are manifold but include:

- Enhancing the personal development of young people, including those from less advantaged backgrounds
- Educating young people to become 'global citizens' and to develop understanding of other cultures
- Encouraging young people to 'make a difference back home' after they return from their expedition.

Raleigh's historical development

Raleigh's ethos and objectives have developed and changed since it was first founded as Operation Drake in 1978. Initially the organisation was explicitly adventure-orientated,

rooted in the ‘Elizabethan spirit of challenge and adventure’ and scientific development (Chapman 1986). In books about the early years of Operation Drake (which became Operation Raleigh in 1984, then Raleigh International in 1992), founders Colonel Blashford Snell and Roger Chapman, described how the expeditions were modelled on the ethos of explorers and colonists:

‘This book...can only tell part of the tale, but it may encourage many more to follow those who have already sailed on the ships, and gone into the deserts, jungles, mountains and swamps, as Sir Walter Raleigh’s colonists did when they went to the New World four hundred years ago.’ (Blashford Snell and Tweedy 1988: 14)

‘Operation Raleigh will strive to help young people to help others, to contribute to human endeavour and knowledge, and to venture forth as the great explorers did to the limits of experience and the world.’ (Chapman 1986: 125)

In 2008, Raleigh continues to subscribe to the values of challenge and adventure as a catalyst for young people’s personal development. However, Raleigh also now defines itself as an educational charity and youth development organisation, which is driven by values of sustainable development and committed to the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (Raleigh 2008).

‘Raleigh was founded on four challenges: the challenge to be selected; the challenge to fundraise; the expedition itself, and the challenge to make a difference locally when you come back.’ (Raleigh’s website, 2008)

‘We act as a catalyst for change, bringing local communities together, sometimes for the first time as one team and giving them the resources and motivation to achieve sustainable development.’ (Raleigh’s website, 2008)

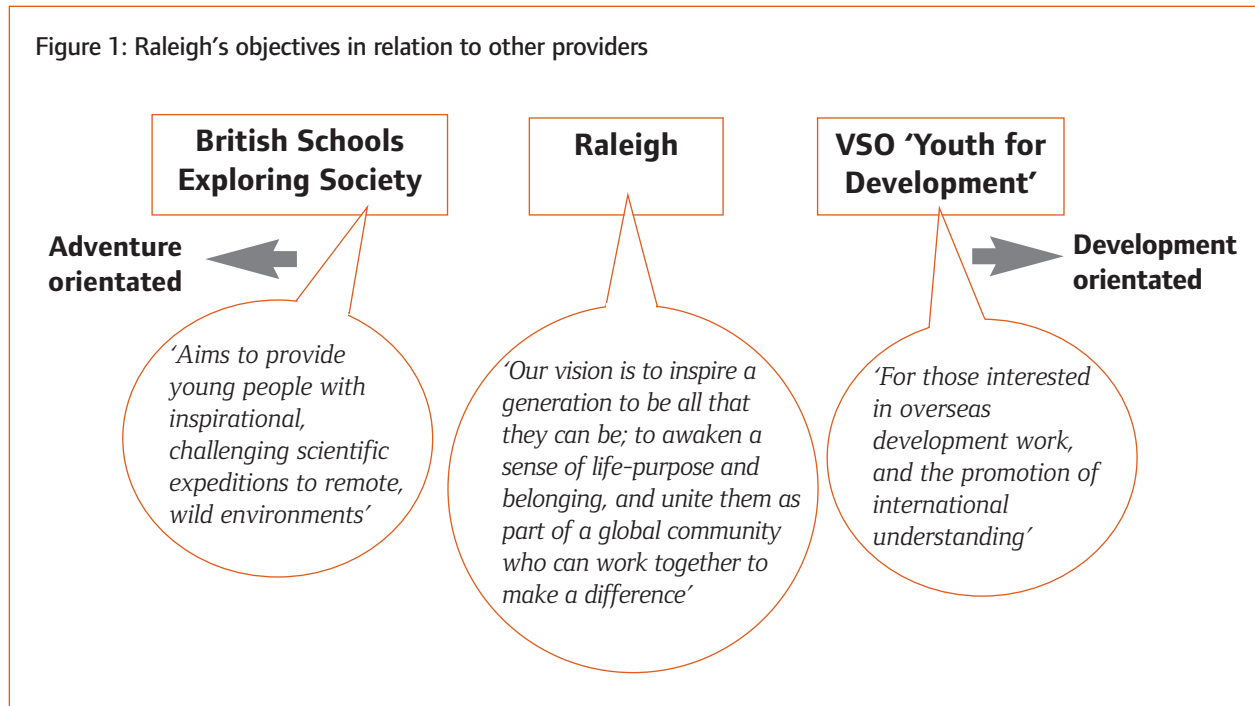
Raleigh’s growth has occurred in the context of the substantial rise in the popularity of gap years among young people, and the concurrent rise in the number of organisations providing overseas volunteering placements aimed at pre-university or university students (Heath 2005). A 2004 Government-commissioned review of the gap year sector found that there are over 800 organisations offering overseas volunteering placements. There are various types of providers offering placements, including both commercial and charitable organisations. The review also suggested that gap year students tend to be predominantly white, middle class and from the South of England (Jones 2004). Raleigh International is one of a much smaller number of organisations that explicitly aims to provide equal opportunities to young people from all backgrounds.

Within the ‘gap year’ industry, organisations have diverse objectives and values, from those that focus on ‘adventure’ and personal development to those working explicitly within an international development framework. As described above, Raleigh was historically founded on the principle of exploration and adventure, but is increasingly concerned with conducting sustainable international development work. As such it is in the position of straddling these different approaches (see Figure 1, opposite).

The challenges that this raises emerged in our research and are discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

The development of Raleigh’s work with disadvantaged youth

From the outset, Operation Raleigh was concerned with providing opportunities to young people from ‘as wide range of backgrounds as possible’ (Chapman 1986). Young people facing particular difficulties require more support to access Raleigh expeditions and have over the years been supported through the Operation Raleigh Inner City Scheme – ORICS, the Youth Development Programme, Motive8 and most recently the Youth Agency Partnership Programme.



These programmes have been through various permutations in terms of structure and selection processes over the years. The Inner City Scheme recruited young people from disadvantaged inner city backgrounds to participate in expeditions via local agencies and professionals around the country. Initially participants were invited on an assessment weekend; held in their own inner city area these were designed to test participants physically and emotionally and were modelled on exercises used in the military. The selection process was strict, and only a limited number of those who attended the weekends were invited to go on an expedition. From this weekend, successful participants went forward to a week-long residential course to further prepare them for the expedition experience.

After the Youth Development Programme (YDP) was formally established, around 1992, potential participants were invited on introductory weekends run at various outdoor sites around the UK. This was followed by a residential development week. These weekends were held without the involvement of other participants from the UK. A lot of attrition occurred across both of these stages, due in part to the sometimes chaotic nature of these young people's lives and sometimes for positive reasons for that individual. Participants would be recommended for this Raleigh programme from across the country by key workers, such as youth workers, community workers and probation officers.

From 1999, a three-day challenge workshop was established six to eight weeks ahead of departure which brought together all participants from the UK who had been selected to go to a particular country, regardless of their route onto expedition. This enabled them to get country-specific information and meet with other participants taking part in their expedition.

In 1998, Raleigh was successful in obtaining European Social Fund money to set up a new scheme that over time became called Motive8. This differed from the previous Youth Development Programme structure because it was longer term and delivered locally by Raleigh employees. It included structured, regular support around issues to do with basic living, and the expeditions were the culmination of these programmes. This process could take six to twelve months, depending on the individual. The scheme also provided support to young people for whom an expedition was not appropriate. It took place in Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, Plymouth, Liverpool, London and Newcastle, where regional Motive8 offices were set up. As well as providing longer-term support prior to the expedition, Motive8 offered participants support after they returned from their expedition.

In more recent years, the selection process has become, where possible and appropriate, based on working with young people to enable them to make their own informed choices. It has therefore encouraged more self selection – young people deciding for themselves to take part – in participation on expeditions. Raleigh still works closely with key workers to assess young people’s readiness for the overseas experience as needed.

In 2003, the Introductory Weekend and the Development Week were combined into one residential course called the Raleigh Outdoor Adventure Residential (ROAR), which is ongoing. The ROAR is run in the countryside and includes elements of the expedition, such as camping out and a short trek, to establish whether the expedition activities are right for the young person, with consideration from the young person her or himself and from Raleigh.

The Motive8 programme formally ended in December 2007. Currently, Raleigh is working in close partnership with youth agencies across the UK in what is called the Youth Agency Partnership Programme (YAPP). The partner organisations are encouraged to work closely with Raleigh in order to recruit and support participants both before and, importantly, after their expedition. Working in this way enables Raleigh to support young people from a much wider geographical area and to work with partners who are best placed to tailor support to the individual young people’s needs.

Clearly, access routes onto the expedition for those from less advantaged backgrounds have undergone many changes over the past 25 years. The process has developed in terms of its ethos, selection criteria, structure and in the extent and nature of the support it has offered to the young people who have taken part. This report places participants’ experiences in this context.

Purpose of this research

This research set out to answer the following question:

- *What long-term influence has Raleigh had on the lives of people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have taken part in its expeditions over the past 25 years?*

In particular, what is the relationship between participating in Raleigh and:

- a) Personal development
- b) Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness
- c) Civic participation

In addition to this explicit objective, the research also carried the following further objectives:

1) To relate findings emerging from the research to current policy developments around youth development, global citizenship and civic participation. Raleigh’s objectives strongly relate to important developments in youth policy concerning the work of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Department for International Development (DfID) and Communities and Local Government (CLG).

2) To explore how participants’ experiences with Raleigh have varied according to a number of factors:

- In relation to the changing ethos and organisation of Raleigh throughout its history
- In relation to the differing personal circumstances of the participants themselves.

3) Our research also aimed to address two significant gaps in the existing literature on overseas expeditions and international youth volunteering:

- Previous research has tended to focus on young people who are taking a ‘gap year’. These young people tend to be relatively affluent, and by definition already on a clear educational or career trajectory. Our research asks how the experience and potential benefits of overseas expeditions differ for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom were not in education or employment at the time that they became involved with Raleigh.

“Previous research has tended to focus on young people who are taking a ‘gap year’. These young people tend to be relatively affluent”

- Most existing studies that have asked participants to evaluate their experiences have done so within a year after participants returned from their expedition. By contacting people who went on expeditions many years ago, our research is uniquely placed to understand the long-term role and significance of these experiences in people's lives.

Structure of the report

In Chapter 2 we describe the methodology used in this research.

In Chapter 3 we outline the broad policy context and academic background within which organisations like Raleigh are working. In particular we explore three overlapping areas of youth policy related to Raleigh's work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds: 'personal development', 'global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness' and 'civic participation'. We also discuss some significant tensions within and between these agendas which relate to our empirical findings.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explore our key research findings, drawing on the life history interviews and survey. Chapter 4 focuses on our findings in relation to personal development, chapter 5 in relation to global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness and chapter 6 in relation to civic participation.

In Chapter 7 we discuss the conclusions of this research, drawing out implications for Raleigh and other policymakers and practitioners concerned with youth policy.

Note on terms used

Throughout this report we use the term 'participants' to refer to all the people who took part in this research. Where we are referring specifically to interviewees or survey respondents, we make this distinction.

In reporting our findings, we frequently use the term 'YDPs' to refer to the young people who went on expeditions as part of the Youth Development Programme or its historical equivalents. We have used this language because it was used by the research participants themselves. We have also used the term 'self-funders' to refer to other young people who went on expeditions but had not come through the Youth Development Programme or its equivalents. Again, this was a term used by our research participants.

We use the term 'venturers' to refer to all the young people who took part in a Raleigh expedition, including both YDPs and 'self funders'.

Throughout the report, we have used direct quotes from participants. These have been identified by interviewee code/survey respondent code, gender and the year that the person went on their Raleigh expedition.

2. Methodology

There were three main phases to this research:

- 1) A literature review of existing research and an audit of the policy context
- 2) An online and postal self-completion survey of past Raleigh participants who had gone on expeditions through the Operation Raleigh Inner City Scheme (ORICS), the Youth Development Programme, Motive8 or the Youth Agency Partnership Programme (YAPP)
- 3) Fifteen life history interviews with past Raleigh participants who had come through these routes.

The survey

ippr surveyed 105 people who had participated in the Youth Development Programme or its equivalents for people from disadvantaged backgrounds over the past 25 years. The participants were recruited using a database provided by Raleigh that lists contact details for 1600 people who have become involved with Raleigh through these routes. This was supplemented by recruitment using online social networking sites such as Facebook and through a ‘snowballing’ method whereby respondents gave us details of other Raleigh participants for whom they had contact details. Survey respondents chose between an online survey and a postal survey. The survey included closed and open questions regarding the impact of Raleigh on their lives.

Sample

The final sample was fairly representative of the overall database in terms of both gender and the year that participants had gone on their expedition (see Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of the sampling strategy).

Figure 2. Comparison of survey sample with overall population

Gender	Raleigh’s database (%)	Survey sample (%)
Male	70	62
Female	30	38
Year of expedition		
Pre-1992	8	4
1993-97	15	7
1998-02	45	52
2003-07	27	38

The interviews

ippr conducted fifteen life history interviews with people who had become involved with Raleigh through the Operation Raleigh Inner City Scheme, the Youth Development Programme or Motive8 since 1989. In these interviews, participants were invited to recount events in their lives in their own words, without being asked too many direct or predetermined questions. The interviews provided unique insight into how interviewees interpreted and understood their past, how they related different life events to each other and how past events shaped their present experience.

In order to aid this process, we also used a timeline in each interview which was constructed jointly by the interviewer and interviewee. This helped the interviewer and interviewee to understand complex series of events and it provided more objective, comparable data of key events in interviewees’ lives.

The interviewees

The interviewees who took part in this research ranged in age from 22 to 40 and had gone on their expeditions between 1989 and 2006. The countries they had gone to were Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chile, Belize, Australia and Costa Rica. Participants described their backgrounds in extremely varied ways. While some said their upbringings were happy and comfortable, others described their lives prior to going on Raleigh as extremely difficult, including experiences of drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, unemployment and violence.

The people we interviewed had become involved with Raleigh through a range of different routes, including the old Youth Training Scheme (YTS) programme, and via youth workers and personal contacts. (The sampling strategy and summary data about the interviewees is provided in the Appendix.)

The interview process

The interviews were conducted face to face, lasted between one and three hours and were recorded with the participants' permission. At the end of each interview, the fieldworker recorded their own post-interview reflections as an aid to the analysis of the interview itself.

Analysis

Interview summaries were written up, including the researchers' commentary on particular issues that arose during the interviews. Vignettes of text were transcribed, to illustrate the key findings of the interviews. These were then coded thematically. A manual analysis of narrative and content was then carried out which incorporated both the interview summaries and survey responses.

The purpose of the qualitative research was to complement the statistical findings of the survey by exploring the underlying meanings, perceptions and experiences of young people who have taken part in Raleigh expeditions. This kind of qualitative method generated data on the differences between people's experiences and on the developing significance of Raleigh in people's lives. It was not the purpose of this qualitative research to generate numerical or statistical findings and so we do not cite the numbers of interviewees expressing a particular point of view in this report.

Methodological challenges

Sampling challenges

We faced the following challenges in relation to our interview and survey sampling.

It was likely that the sample was:

- Weighted towards participants who had had reasonably stable lives since participating in Raleigh. Because people were recruited using very old contact details, those who were recruited were likely to be people who had not moved very many times, whose family had not moved, or who had strong networks with friends, family or other Raleigh participants, which enabled them to be reached.
- Weighted towards people who felt confident enough to be interviewed or to complete a survey.
- Weighted towards people who felt positively towards Raleigh and who were therefore willing to give their time to be interviewed or complete the survey.

Other methodological issues

There are a number of methodological advantages in asking volunteers to reflect on their experience years after the event. First, participants are more able to contextualise their experience in relation to things that happened subsequently. Second, they have more sense of how the experience affected them in the long term. Third, it has been suggested that this may enable 'post-placement euphoria' to wear off and means that participants may feel less 'emotionally bound' to the organisation (Powell and Bratovic 2007). However, it is important to note that we were using a 'subjectivist' methodology,

“The experience of host communities is a significant area for further research”

which is concerned with how people interpret and make sense of their worlds (Rutter *et al* 2007) and which places participants’ accounts of their lives centre stage.

Through using life history interviews, this research was able to explore how the different impacts that participants reported related to their different life experiences, both before and after their expedition. The research was also able to relate these empirical findings to the findings of a growing number of studies focused on gap years, expeditions and volunteer tourism.

This research did not attempt to examine Raleigh’s expeditions from the perspective of the host communities in which they take place. While our focus was specifically on the significance of Raleigh for young people from the UK, we recognise that the experience of host communities is a significant area for further research. This is particularly important in order to challenge the tendency, which has been noted by commentators from the international development community, for analysis and assessment of schemes to be skewed towards the needs of the Western volunteer rather than the communities they are designed to benefit (Griffin 2004).

Finally, this analysis looks at young people’s experiences through the lens of categories used by policymakers. Where possible, we have balanced this with the language and perspectives of participants themselves. Through conducting open life history interviews we aimed to avoid imposing policy frameworks and assumptions on the participants we spoke to. However we acknowledge that there is a tension between assessing Raleigh’s work in relation to policy agendas and exploring the schemes from the perspectives of the participants themselves.

Further details of the methodology and ethical approach are provided in Appendix A.

3. Raleigh and the wider context

In Chapter 1, we described the various objectives that underpin Raleigh's current work. Clearly, while Raleigh has its own objectives, it must also be responsive to the political context, as well as to new thinking emerging from academic and policy research.

This chapter explores some of the broad policy and academic developments relevant to Raleigh's work. It also summarises recent policy developments and research in relation to overseas expeditions.

Personal development: the policy and research context

Raleigh's focus on the personal development of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is increasingly politically salient. The UK's relatively poor record on social mobility, child poverty and inequality is receiving growing attention from politicians from across the political spectrum. Despite some recent evidence that government policy may be starting to have an impact on some of these problems (see for example Cabinet Office 2008, Blanden and Machin 2007), important challenges remain. The social class gap in educational attainment remains higher in the UK than in many other European countries and opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed later in life appear to be particularly constrained in this country (Cabinet Office 2008, DfES 2006, Blanden *et al* 2005). High-profile surveys of youth wellbeing, such as that by Unicef (2007), have placed the UK poorly in comparison with other advanced capitalist economies in terms of its ability to produce happy and confident young people (*ibid*, Margo and Stevens 2008).

At the same time, commentators have emphasised the increasingly individualised nature of young people's transitions: the decline of traditional pathways to employment and of formal organisational support structures. While young people's educational and employment chances are more strongly determined by their upbringing and background than previous generations', 'softer' skills, personal agency and motivation are considered to be increasingly important determinants of success (Margo *et al* 2006, Henderson *et al* 2007).

Concern about youth wellbeing and development has grown to dominate agendas at the Departments for Children, Schools and Families (DSCF), Health (DH), and Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the last five to seven years. The launch of Every Child Matters by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2005 – which set out five key outcomes every child should enjoy – marked a key turning point in the focus of youth policy. Alongside the hard measures of achievement in childhood and adolescence – such as educational attainment and health – politicians and the public are increasingly concerned with less tangible facets of young people's lives such as happiness, sociability and behaviour. Every Child Matters was the Labour government's response to this and illustrated a clear attempt to tackle wellbeing as well as attainment. This new approach continues to drive youth policymaking as has been reflected in subsequent policy developments such as the Youth Matters Green Paper (2005), The Children's Plan (2007) and the Youth Taskforce Action Plan (2008).

The ingredients of a healthy transition from adolescence to adulthood have been debated by people working within a range of academic disciplines including anthropology, sociology and psychology. Common to these debates is a sense that a key task of adolescence and early adulthood is the change from the protected life of childhood, to a position of autonomy and independence. A strong theme in development psychology and anthropological literature is that this involves a process of testing out the adult world – exploring its possibilities and testing preliminary identities and choices for living (Sugarman 2001). In these models, rebellion and a degree of conflict are considered a fundamental part of the developmental process (Henderson *et al* 2007).

“Politicians and the public are increasingly concerned with less tangible facets of young people's lives such as happiness, sociability and behaviour”

In policy research, many recent reports have studied the role of organised or purposeful activities in enhancing psychological development. They indicate that activities that promote structured learning with adult leaders, involve gaining skills and progressing over a long period of time, and involve group work, are particularly good for emotional development (Margo *et al* 2006). Furthermore, activities that take place outside normal social contexts can enable young people to escape local peer influences and redefine themselves more positively (*ibid*).

The Government has been very responsive to research in this area and the policy paper *Aiming High* (HM Treasury 2007) promised extra funding for purposeful activities for children and teenagers – although it did not focus on travel or experiences abroad. The DCSF has recently been emphasising the theme of a wider definition of learning, and has announced a series of initiatives to support learning outside of school (DCSF 2008a). David Cameron's Conservatives have also picked up on this agenda, proposing a 'National Citizens Service' for all 16-year-olds, which would focus on personal development activities, community activities, outdoor residential activity and culminate in a ceremony symbolising their transition to adulthood.

Politicians and researchers concerned with 'personal development' have been particularly interested in improving opportunities and life chances for young people from less advantaged backgrounds. For example, the Conservatives have stated that the National Citizen Service scheme will be specifically geared towards those who have 'fallen off the radar' (Conservative Party 2007, 2008). This reflects concern for the ways in which young people's lives are shaped by the growing inequalities in their material, social, cultural and symbolic resources (Henderson *et al* 2007). One example of these inequalities is that young people from less advantaged backgrounds often have relatively limited access to the types of constructive, organised and educational activities that enhance personal and social development (Margo *et al* 2006).

Research on the importance of activities has begun to reveal which young people will be most responsive to activities. Policymakers often talk about the 'bottom 5 per cent' of young people (Sodha and Margo 2008). This refers to the 5 per cent of every generation who do not succeed at school, in the labour market or in society. It has been claimed there is a need to distinguish between a group of young people who require intensive intervention from social services and health services and other young people from deprived backgrounds who can benefit from less intensive interventions, such as organised activities and trips (Margo and Sodha 2007).

Personal development and overseas expeditions

Past research into overseas expeditions and gap years has frequently focused on impacts in relation to young people's personal development. Empirical research into overseas expeditions has highlighted their role as 'rites of passage', providing young people with a change from their usual social environment and a chance to explore new ways of being and acting. Researchers have also highlighted the potential of gap year schemes to enhance a whole range of life skills, including greater independence and the ability to take decisions, the development of interpersonal skills, problem solving, self-discipline, leadership skills, communication skills (such as team working) and managing money (Jones 2004).

The case for providing equal access to structured activities occurs in a context in which growing numbers of middle-class young people are choosing to take gap years. Researchers have argued that gap year placements are increasingly being viewed as a means by which those who can afford them are able to gain an advantage in relation to university admissions and the graduate labour market (Heath 2005). In contrast to gap year organisations, Raleigh aims to be inclusive and tailored to the individual, by providing subsidised access to these opportunities to young people from less affluent backgrounds. The final report of the Russell Commission (Russell 2005) used Raleigh's Motive8 scheme as a case study to demonstrate how overseas volunteering can benefit young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The report suggested that opening up international volunteering opportunities could provide a route for enhancing the skills, employability and career prospects of young people who are 'not in employment, education or training' or 'NEET' (*ibid*).

Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness: the policy and research context

In this report we use the terms 'global citizenship' and 'cross-cultural awareness' to refer both to Raleigh's objectives and to a range of current policy agendas that are concerned with equipping young people in the UK for the global age.

There is a growing sense among policymakers that young people need to be educated in order to respond to both the challenges and opportunities of globalisation. This has been enhanced by evidence that suggests that British children are less internationally aware than their counterparts from other countries (British Council 2007). This concern is also a response to fears about the disengagement and alienation of young people in UK society (Young and Shah 2008, Henderson *et al* 2007, Margo *et al* 2006).

Below we discuss three areas of policy that are concerned with young people and globalisation, which are relevant to Raleigh's work.

Cultural diversity and community cohesion

Young people in Britain live in increasingly diverse communities and globalisation and migration trends mean that there is every likelihood that this trend will continue (Rogers and Muir 2007). 13 per cent of young people aged 16 to 24 are from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, compared with 11 per cent of the overall population¹. Concern about issues relating to diversity have had an increasingly high profile within educational and youth policy agendas (Agegbo 2007). This has emerged in the context of evidence about young people living 'parallel lives' in urban contexts (Cantle 2001) and the ongoing, highly politicised public discourse around multiculturalism and community cohesion (Rogers and Muir 2007).

Recent policy has been geared towards encouraging tolerance and respect for diversity among young people. For example, in 2006, the duty to promote community cohesion put legal requirements on schools to encourage an understanding of diversity. And in 2007, the DCSF accepted the key recommendation of Sir Keith Agegbo's report, which argued that the themes of identity and diversity should be addressed as part of the national curriculum.

In this context, there is growing recognition of the importance of international opportunities, such as those provided by Raleigh, which enable young people to interact in a meaningful way with people from different cultures (British Council 2008).

UK competitiveness in the global age

Politicians are increasingly eager to encourage young British people's entrepreneurial spirit, and to equip them with the skills they need to compete in the global economy. This stems partly from the Leitch Review of Skills, which directed policymakers to the need for increased skills if the UK is to prosper in the long term (Leitch 2006). This objective was recently reflected in the launch in 2008 of the Prime Minister's Global Fellowship scheme, a pilot programme for 18- to 19-year-olds, drawn from a wide range of socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, which sends them on structured work placements to China, India or Brazil. The scheme aims to help young people develop the experience, knowledge and attitudes they need in order to compete against the modern growth economies, such as those in Asia. In the scheme's own words:

'This opportunity marks a conscious step in developing the skills and confidence to turn the challenges of living in an interdependent world into opportunities and the ability to make the most of them. No matter where or how they live, it matters that today's generation of young people grow up understanding first-hand what globalization means for all people.'
(www.global-fellowship.org/default.aspx?page=1)

International development

From the perspective of those working within the international development community, globalisation provides a strong imperative for educating young people about issues to do with global justice, poverty reduction and sustainable development (Andreotti 2007). It has been argued that young people in the UK need

1. Based on an ippr calculation of the 2008 Labour Force Survey

to be engaged with these issues if the Government is to be able to achieve its goals around community cohesion, environmental sustainability and international poverty reduction. Education about international development has also been promoted as a way of addressing youth disengagement, through stimulating young people to want to change the world around them (Young and Shah 2008).

Over the past 10 years, policy support for education relating to international development has been evidenced by increased funding for school-based initiatives that support global perspectives and knowledge of development issues. For example, the secondary school curriculum being implemented from 2008 includes a global and sustainable development dimension across all subjects (Young and Shah 2008). However, there has also been recognition of the dearth of opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to critically engage with these global issues (*ibid*, Henderson *et al* 2007).

Global citizenship, cross-cultural awareness and overseas expeditions

Much of the recent political debate and research about international volunteering has come from people working within international development and development education. In 2005, the Russell Commission argued that structured overseas programmes for young people can embed a valuable sense of global citizenship in education, which is a key feature within the Government's international education strategy (Russell 2005). The report argued that in order to achieve this, overseas volunteering schemes should be based on the principles of responsiveness to real community needs, sustainability, reciprocity and partnership between the source and host communities. This has been picked up by the Department for International Development, which has recently funded a scheme, 'Platform2', that explicitly aims to widen knowledge of international development issues. The scheme sends young people from 'less advantaged' backgrounds on overseas placements over a three-year period with the aim of encouraging them to become 'international development champions' who will promote international development in their communities back home (DfID 2008).

As the benefits of experiential learning overseas have been increasingly promoted, people working within a development studies framework have sounded a note of caution. From their perspective, international volunteering schemes have specific potential advantages. First, they provide an opportunity to encourage young people to develop an understanding of issues such as global inequality, poverty and sustainable development. Second, they are an opportunity to link education to social change and to stimulate young people to take social action in order to address global problems (Simpson 2004). However, the extent to which overseas volunteering schemes are currently achieving these objectives has been called into question.

Academics working on international development issues have expressed particular concern about two aspects of international volunteering. First, questions have been raised about the impact of these schemes on host communities, not just in terms of the sustainability and value of the projects but also in terms of the 'westernisation' and patriarchal models of development that they may draw on. Second, it has been argued that there needs to be more robust evidence regarding their proposed educational benefits for volunteers. In a critical study of gap years and the 'volunteer tourism' industry, Simpson (2004) argued that the long-term educational benefits attributed to overseas placements are based on flawed assumptions about the way participants learn about 'difference'. She suggested that the current approach of most gap year providers towards learning is based on two flawed assumptions: that just through meeting 'others' one will come to better understandings of them, and that 'experience' (in the sense of physical interaction), can in and of itself increase people's understanding of global issues.

Researchers have responded directly to Simpson's arguments and have presented a counter-balance to this negative analysis of 'volunteer-tourism'. In an empirical study of structured overseas placement schemes in two developing countries, Jones (2005) argued that the placements did break down volunteers' prejudices about the country

they visited and dispelled simplistic and uninformed viewpoints about these countries and the people who lived there. Jones also found that the promotion and development of a global perspective was enhanced in three ways:

- ‘Many volunteers suggested that global volunteering had promoted a realisation of the complex linkages between host countries and western countries, including their home’ (Jones 2005: 16)
- ‘Volunteers appeared to have developed a modest sense of empowerment to affect global society’ (ibid: 16) – the ability to affect change through individual action
- ‘Volunteers displayed greater disposition towards the idea of future volunteering than they had prior to their placement’ (ibid: 17) – which acts as a ‘taster to motivate in the future’.

The evidence from other empirical research has been less clear. On the basis of his empirical research with 14 Raleigh venturers, Beames argued that expeditionary learning was ‘both subjective and personally relevant’ to participants (Beames 2005: 20). He found that participants returned from their expedition with an increased appreciation of modern conveniences in their home community and an awareness of the differences and imbalances between life in the expedition host country compared with the UK. However, he also raised questions about whether these new values would last in the long term, highlighting participants’ fears that they would dissolve once they returned to their usual home environment.

By working with participants many years after they had returned from their expedition, our research was uniquely placed to investigate not only what participants learnt at the time, but the ways in which their experience impacted on their values and actions in the long term.

Civic participation: the policy and research context

As described in Chapter 1, the ‘fourth challenge’ for Raleigh participants is to ‘make a difference back home’ after returning from their expedition. This relates clearly to the recent policy focus on youth citizenship and participation, an area that both Gordon Brown and David Cameron have expressed strong interest in.

The case for promoting the civic engagement of young people has been made both in terms of the benefits for the individual and the wider benefits for society. In part, this is a response to the well documented ‘problematism’ of youth, in the media and society at large (YouthNet UK and British Youth Council 2006, Young and Shah 2008, Henderson *et al* 2007, Margo *et al* 2006, Heath 2007). It has also occurred in the context of growing concern about the disengagement of young people from democratic processes and has been based on the popular but contested assumption that young people are disconnected from their local communities (Carnegie Young People Initiative 2008, Henderson *et al* 2007, Heath unpublished).

In recent years, a wealth of policy reports and initiatives have addressed the need for young people to become more involved in their local communities, not only through formal education – with the introduction of Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject in 2002 – but also through supporting participation in local decision-making and volunteering.

The development of structured volunteering opportunities for young people has been ongoing, including the flagship Millennium Volunteer Scheme for young people (Heath 2005) and receiving its most explicit support in 2005, with the recommendations of the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement. The Commission explicitly made the case for ‘a step change in the diversity, quantity and quality of young people’s volunteering’ (Russell 2005: 3, also cited in Heath 2007). Following on from this, the Office of the Third Sector has committed £117 million to youth volunteering between 2008 and 2011, through the Russell Commission’s implementation body ‘v’, and to building a new national youth volunteering

“Our research was uniquely placed to investigate not only what participants learnt at the time, but the ways in which their experience impacted on their values and actions in the long term”

framework for 16- to 25-year-olds in England. There also appears to be growing support for structured 'Youth Service' schemes, which suggest that everyone aged 16 to 18 do some form of volunteering or community service. As noted above, the Conservative Party has recently proposed a structured National Citizens Service for all 16-year-olds. And in 2007, ippr made the case for a community service element to the compulsory school curriculum 'in order to help instil a greater sense of active citizenship among young people' (Rogers and Muir 2007: 8).

Most recently the Youth Citizenship Commission was set up by the Government and is due to report in Spring 2009. The Commission's objectives include considering how to increase young people's participation in politics, the development of citizenship among disadvantaged groups and how active citizenship can be promoted through volunteering and community engagement (Ministry of Justice 2008).

Policy recommendations and initiatives relating to 'active citizenship' have tended to focus on UK-based activity (Heath unpublished). However, there are some exceptions. In particular, some types of overseas gap year activities have been successfully promoted on the basis that they enhance young people's sense of citizenship and community responsibility after they return home (Jones 2004, Heath 2005). The Russell Commission also included proposals for funding overseas placements, partly on the basis that overseas volunteering schemes with clear links to UK-based programmes could engender a long-term commitment to volunteering and future civic activity. However, the Commission also reiterated the findings of a review of gap years commissioned by the DfES which noted that an ongoing commitment to civic participation is very much dependent on how young people's experiences are embedded in the UK context after their return (Jones 2004).

Civic participation and overseas expeditions

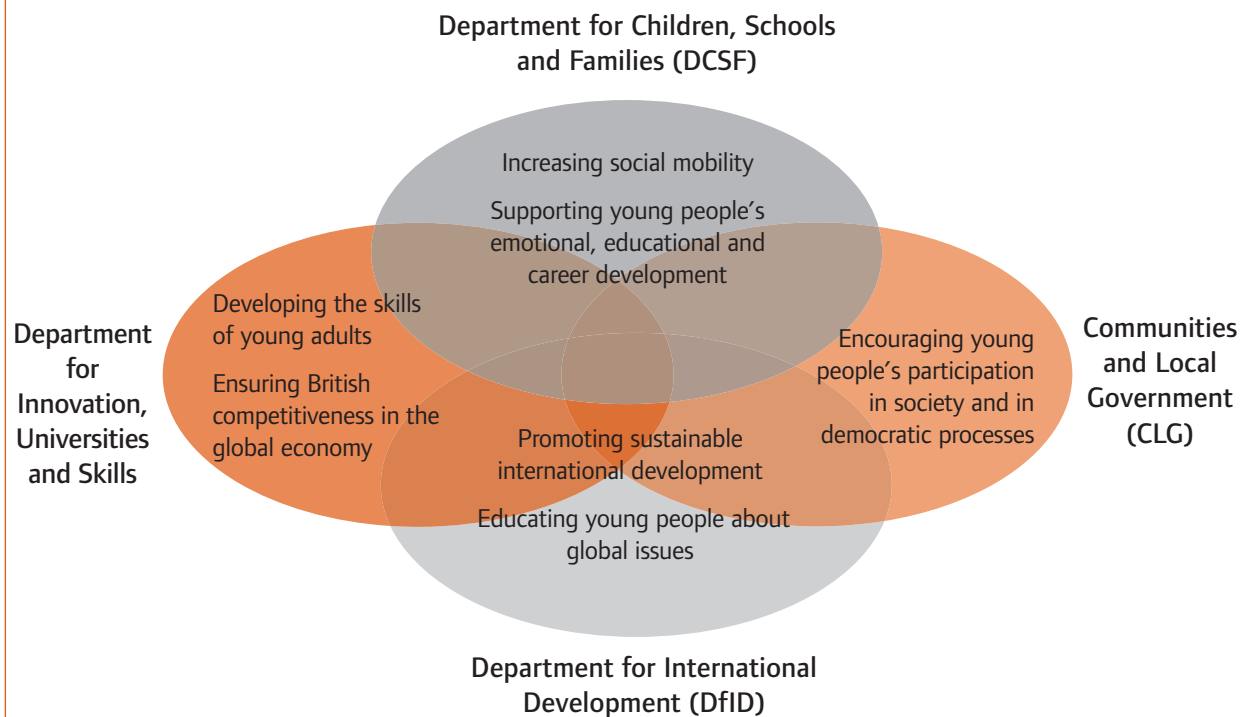
There is limited research into how young people who have volunteered overseas subsequently relate to their communities back home. Both the youth volunteering agenda and the gap year lobby have argued that overseas placements are valuable for wider society because they can encourage young people to participate in activities such as volunteering on their return. Previous research into overseas expeditions has noted how little mention there is of how individuals who return home then relate to bigger networks of people in their local communities. One investigation that did look at this found that there was no evidence indicating that participants had changed their attitudes or behaviours towards the community as a result of their expedition (Kennedy 1992 cited in Beames 2005). It has also been argued that the level of benefit to UK society depends on how young people's experiences are embedded in a UK context upon their return home (Jones 2005).

Overlapping but conflicting agendas?

As we have highlighted, the purpose and potential benefits of interventions such as those offered by Raleigh are understood differently by people working across different policy areas (see Figure 3).

From the perspective of policymakers in the Department for Children, Schools and Families who are focusing on social mobility and well-being, the benefits of overseas placements such as this tend to be understood in terms of the instrumental impacts on the individual volunteer. For Communities and Local Government, the focus is more on the benefits for the volunteer's community back home, as people return to their communities with a new zest for participation and volunteering. From the perspective of the Department for International Development, overseas volunteering can act as a force for global action, encouraging participants to reflect on issues to do with social justice and act to change the world around them.

Figure 3: Overlapping policy agendas relevant to Raleigh's work



The following three chapters examine our empirical findings under the headings of 'Personal development', 'Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness' and 'Civic participation'. We have structured our findings in this way to make them relevant both to Raleigh's objectives and to the current policy and research context as outlined above. However, although these are accepted distinctions used by policymakers and researchers, they were not necessarily used by the research participants. Therefore, throughout these chapters we have also included the language and frameworks the research participants themselves used.

4. Personal development

In this chapter we turn to our research findings and explore the way that our research participants spoke about their personal development during and after their Raleigh expeditions.

We then identify three significant and inter-related ways in which participating in Raleigh influenced participants' transition to adulthood, including an analysis of how these relate to Raleigh's programme structure:

- Wellbeing
- Developing sense of identity
- Skills, education and career development.

Finally, we explore how the different ways that Raleigh impacted on participants relate to their life experiences and personal circumstances, before and after their expedition.

Participants' narratives: personal development and social mobility

Participants' narratives about the impact of Raleigh on their personal development were striking in two ways.

First, participants credited Raleigh as being an experience that had transformed their lives. This was evidenced by the 83 per cent of survey respondents who said that Raleigh had a long-term impact on their personal development and by comments such as the following:

'In brief it changed my life, it gave me the opportunity to explore who I was and where I wanted to be in life' (Survey respondent no. 80, female, 2003)

A number of participants said that they believed their life would have taken a much more negative course if they had not participated in Raleigh. 43 per cent of survey respondents said that their willingness to engage in risky behaviour such as drug-taking or crime decreased as a result of taking part in Raleigh. Some participants also described how Raleigh had helped them overcome drug and alcohol dependency and stay out of jail:

'Without the help of Raleigh International and especially the staff and crew I would probably be sitting with a bag of glue stuck to my face in a dark alley somewhere where no one would find me. The skills and development programme that they have and use is totally mint' (Survey respondent no. 99, male, 2000)

Participants described how Raleigh has made them stronger, enabled them to take control of their life, move on from destructive behaviours and also helped them cope with difficult times that arose after they got back.

Second, we found that interviewees and survey respondents described their Raleigh experiences using language around 'development', 'growth' and using the metaphor of 'life as a journey'. Raleigh was described as a 'turning point' for people 'at the crossroads', as a vehicle for 'personal growth' and as a way out of being 'stuck':

'I was only 17 when I went on the expedition and so my mind was still adolescent. I feel that the experience I gained from working in a developing country helped me to mature quickly and changed my perspective on life in general and what I wanted out of my life' (Survey respondent no. 62, female, 1999)

'I went on a training week where I met others that were at similar stages [and] situations. Stuck. We did many team building exercises, personal challenges, walking, talking, cooking, caring, sharing our stories. Grew in confidence and were given the opportunity to go on an expedition where the personal work continued whilst we made a difference to others'
(Survey respondent no. 105, female, 1998)

Participants described Raleigh's impact on their personal development holistically and as an ongoing process – in relation to the development of their identity, their relationships, their ability to cope with life and their approach to their education and work. Some contrasted this with the attitude of venturers from wealthier backgrounds who, it was suggested, saw Raleigh as one step on a clearly defined path to success:

'For a lot of the "standard" venturers I think it was something which that part of society probably did in a gap year or something or as part of their portfolio for their development, and it was something else that they ticked. Not all of them obviously but some of them' (Interviewee 1, male, 1993)

'Personal development is an ongoing thing and the destination is not always the most important thing. The process can be more valuable and [give] courage to keep going when things get tough or go wrong' (Survey respondent no. 80, female, 2003)

Wellbeing

A strong theme among participants was that being involved with Raleigh had helped them become emotionally stronger and more stable. Participants emphasised that the very fact that they had been given the opportunity to go on a Raleigh expedition had increased their self-esteem, and that they would never have been offered a chance like this ordinarily. Some described how being given the opportunity made them feel that someone out there had confidence in them, which increased their self-belief.

Participants also said that the memory of Raleigh was in itself good for their mental health because it provided a chance to reflect on a time when they had achieved something difficult, and was a source of pride. This helped them feel stronger and helped them to cope with things that happened to them later in life:

'Before I joined Raleigh International I was going through a really hard time, extremely low and didn't see the point in my existence, I didn't even see the point in getting out of bed. I was taking anti-depressants, seeing councillors. When I came back from Mongolia knowing I have seen what I had and done what I had with Raleigh it has made me much more positive and proud of myself. I'm still very proud of myself and I always will be as I have achieved and learnt so much and not many people will get the chance, so I think I am very lucky! Things are still difficult at times but I'm stronger and more positive!' (Survey respondent no. 5, female, 2000)

'I feel refreshed still when I think about the time I spent in Namibia five years later' (Survey respondent no. 71, male, 2003)

Participants also described how their expedition experiences helped them develop a greater sense of having control over their lives. 79 per cent of survey respondents said that their sense of being in control of things that happen to them had increased as a result of participating in Raleigh:

'Everything changed – increased greatly from not being able to make my own decisions in life to being in complete control of my own life' (Survey respondent no. 106, male, 1999)

Many participants who reported these long-term benefits also said that, in the immediate aftermath of their expedition, they felt depressed or low. They explained this

“A strong theme among participants was that being involved with Raleigh had helped them become emotionally stronger and more stable”

in terms of the contrast between the sense of purpose, sociability and support they had experienced while on the expedition compared with life at home. They also described the difficulty in relating to people back home who did not understand what they had been through. While most of this group found that the post-expedition low motivated them to seek out new opportunities and to be clearer about what they wanted out of life, others said that their depression was longer-lasting. (See section 'Understanding different impacts in the context of participants' lives' below for a more detailed discussion of these differences.)

Overall this evidence supports previous ippr research which has found that investment in certain types of extra-curricular activities can contribute to the well-being of young people by enhancing their 'resilience' – the overall ability of individuals to remain stable and maintain healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning in the face of disruption and chaos (Margo and Sodha 2007). Our findings are also particularly significant in the context of previous ippr research which found that the extent to which young people have a sense of control over their lives is an important determinant of future mental health, social mobility and labour market success (ibid).

Unfamiliar environments, risk and danger

Our research suggests that the unfamiliarity of the expedition locations is an important aspect of the Raleigh experience, which helped people to develop a long-term sense of resilience. For many Youth Development Programme (YDP) participants, Raleigh provides a rare opportunity to travel away from their home environment. 81 per cent of survey respondents said that being in a remote environment where it was necessary to be self-sufficient was a very important part of their overall experience. Participants described a sense of achievement at having survived in a place that was so far removed from their comfort zone, and dealing with an environment that was so different to home:

'I think it's really good to have that period of time where you've not got everything around you, you've not got your own comforts ... And I think it does you good to have to cope without all those things really' (Interviewee J, female, 1991)

Many participants said that having some distance from friends and peers at home gave them a new perspective and helped them to question destructive patterns that they had been involved in at home.

As was discussed in Chapter 1, Raleigh's ethos has always been based on the idea that encounters with dangerous and unknown situations are integral to personal development. 77 per cent of survey respondents said that undertaking difficult mental and physical challenges was a very important aspect of their overall experience. Interviewees described how the process of overcoming challenging situations contributed to their sense of pride and achievement. This was demonstrated by the stories we were told that described dangerous encounters on expeditions, both in terms of the extremities of the physical environment and also in relation to local communities, who, in some cases, were perceived as hostile. Interviewees talked about their own ability to deal with this danger, often describing their own heroic or leadership role when faced with difficult situations:

'It was something that no one else had experienced before. There were elements of danger, but it was true sense of adventure which I think is sadly – in this world, this ever shrinking world, this global village – is less and less to be found'
(Interviewee I, male, 1993)

However, participants also expressed complex and contradictory views about the level of risk they felt venturers should be exposed to while on expedition. Some people felt that Raleigh did not take their explorer ethos far enough and they argued that they should have been given greater freedom to explore their environment and mix with the local communities. Others felt that Raleigh took too many risks and that safety and medical standards should be more stringent. This might be a reflection of the fact that people who are accepted on to the expeditions can be at very different stages, physically and

emotionally. It is also a reflection of a tension facing many organisations running overseas expeditions. There is an expectation among participants that organisations will provide opportunities for adventure and risk while also guaranteeing a safe environment. This difficulty facing expedition providers in balancing these different expectations has been noted in previous research (Simpson 2004).

Three participants with whom we made contact reported incidents in which venturers and staff members had been seriously hurt (and in one case killed) while they were on an expedition. Although these experiences were extremely rare, they had serious negative long-term repercussions for the participants involved.

Developing sense of self

Theoretical and empirical studies in development psychology suggest that a key task during adolescence and early adulthood is the questioning of identity and the development of a more defined sense of self (Sugarman 2001, Marcia 1966). Previous ippr research has found a growing divide between the socialisation experiences of the economically best and worst off. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to spend time with peers who influenced them negatively, in a less secure local environment and are less likely to have access to the kinds of activities that help them develop a more defined, independent sense of identity (Margo *et al* 2006). There is also substantial evidence showing that young people from particular backgrounds face being stigmatised and stereotyped, both by the media and society at large (YouthNet UK and British Youth Council 2006).

Previous research into Raleigh expeditions has found that the experience of working closely with a group of peers may help young people to move away from an identity they are not comfortable with. It has been suggested that the opportunity to interact with people from varied backgrounds in different social circumstances offers people a chance to redefine their identity away from the constrictive pressures of home life (Beames 2005).

In our research, participants talked explicitly about how Raleigh had played a transformative role in helping them to 'grow up', providing an opportunity to develop a sense of independence from parents and friends at home, to become more extrovert and to develop a stronger sense of their own identity:

'I'd recommend it to anyone. Even people who already think: "oh I've done a bit of travelling, I've done this". But yes you can go to a new country you've never been to, yes you can take part in a project... but that's not the main point to me of Operation Raleigh. I mean, I wanted to do something but I think the main thing that people get out of it is having to work together as a team for three months and the relationships you build up, even though, you know, you don't keep them going. But I think you learn, you learn more about yourself than you do about the other people because... especially like ours, we were in the middle of nowhere... You've got to work together. You can't just say I'm fed up with you lot and go home. And I think that's the key thing about it, is what you learn about yourself when you're forced to get along with people' (Interviewee K, male, 1989)

'I really grew in those two weeks, you know, thinking about being able to coordinate, being able to manage, being able to plan, forecast, estimate' (Interviewee I, male, 1993)

Leaving the home environment

We found that the opportunity to spend time in a different environment away from pressures at home was very important to participants. Some described their local environment as limiting, boring or unfulfilling and talked about the destructive influences of their peers at home. Participants described how Raleigh enabled them to escape negative influences for a time in order to explore what they were capable of and what they wanted out of life.

“For one group, participating in Raleigh was an opportunity to explore and question their identity and social status in a way that raised their aspirations and self esteem”

76 per cent of survey respondents said that being with other Raleigh participants from different backgrounds from their own was a very important aspect of their Raleigh experience. Participants described how the intensity of the relationships formed was accentuated by the unfamiliar and challenging nature of the expedition environment. Interviewees talked about how much they were affected by the close and often conflictual relationships that developed. However, the intense interaction with people from different backgrounds impacted on YDP venturers’ sense of identity in different ways. For one group, participating in Raleigh was an opportunity to explore and question their identity and social status in a way that raised their aspirations and self esteem. In contrast, others felt that their expedition experience confirmed, rather than challenged, their existing sense of themselves and their place in society.

Social class

A strong theme in our research was that participants distinguished between themselves and the other venturers on the basis of social class. Many YDP participants emphasised the differences between themselves and the ‘self-funding’ venturers. They said that people on the expeditions were very aware of who had paid for their expedition and who had not. The ‘self funders’ were variously described as being ‘upper class’, ‘toffs’, people who spoke in a ‘posh’ voice and ‘university types’. In contrast, many interviewees described themselves as ‘working class’ and one described the YDPs as ‘the workers’:

‘I learnt to control my temper with certain people who I feel looked down on me because of what class I’m in – I’m an ex drug user – compared to a snob born with a silver spoon in their mouth – certain others’ (Survey respondent no. 89, male, 2005)

Participants described the effect of bringing together people from such different social backgrounds in terms of the ensuing conflict and tension that developed between these two groups. However, while some described this as a negative process, others were more positive. Those who were positive felt they learnt how to relate to different types of people as a result, to be more tolerant, overcome other people’s preconceptions and challenge their own assumptions about people from different backgrounds:

‘It was really hard for me to get on with a lot of the people that I met on Raleigh because our worlds were so different. You know, very different personalities, and really struggled – you know, people that I would never have given the time of day and I wouldn’t have bothered talking to in real life – you’ve got to and it forces you to and it was a real learning curve’ (Interviewee J, female, 1991)

Mixing with people from different backgrounds provided some participants with an opportunity to reflect on and question their existing social status. One interviewee described how this experience raised his aspirations and made him more aware of his own potential:

‘For the first time in my life I was with people from different parts of society that I didn’t normally associate with or come into contact with ... When I did go on an expedition, I was with what they call “standard” venturers as well. And in my life up to then, I’d never spent any time with people from very privileged backgrounds and people with very good schooling and also graduates and undergraduates ... But I started to realise – not to sound big-headed – that I potentially had the intelligence, perhaps to consider going to college and university, where before it wasn’t even on the agenda’ (Interviewee I, male, 1993)

‘Because of the people I met at Raleigh I decided to return to education after a period of seven years [away] from it... After leaving school early and at one point nearly going to jail, I wholly attribute the turn around I have made to the Raleigh experience. Through meeting different people who had been to

university I was able to see the benefits of this and thus moved my life in a new direction' (Survey respondent 77, male, 2001)

However, other people described how the conflict between members of the group reinforced their sense of being different to and unable to get on with people from upper-middle-class backgrounds:

'Most of the people that I went along with I didn't get along with, because where I came up through the Princes Trust I didn't have to pay... because of my circumstances... and I think some of the people that did pay felt, I don't know... but they felt "why did I have to pay this and these ones have done it for nothing" ... All the people in university continued their studies...and I'm just trying to get my life back on track and I think they sort of held it against me ... The people that I got along with were the people that come up through the same situation as me, the same background as me. But the other people, I couldn't get along with, 'cause they're a completely different kettle of fish to me' (Interviewee F, male, 2004)

A strong theme was that the label 'YDP' was divisive, both for those participants who themselves chose to identify with it and for those who were branded with this label by others in the group. But some people felt that being a 'YDP' was a source of pride; they emphasised this by giving examples of ways in which the YDPs had worked harder than other venturers or got more out of the expedition:

'A standard venturer – no disrespect to them but they're like the mainstream. They know what's expected on the weekends, they know that they have to do certain things and as long as they jump through the hoops and open the doors, they can pretty much get on the expedition. Whereas the Youth Development venturers – if they want to question something, they'll question it' (Interviewee I, male, 1993)

An interviewee² told us about an incident in which himself and another YDP behaved heroically in comparison with the non-YDPs:

'The village we were building the wall for caught fire, and basically the project managers had said we couldn't go over and help them because it was too dangerous ... Me and [my mate]... both thought that was bullshit – what's the point of being here to build the wall? ... We helped organise them and got fires put out in about an hour. We went back to our tents and sitting outside our tents were the project managers waiting for us... and they said "We'll deal with you in the morning", but said everyone else wanted a word... They essentially made us sit down and had everyone have a go at us, because basically everyone was turning round and saying, "Well, don't you think we wanted to go and help?" ... We just turned around and said "Well, you've got free choice. You can make your own decision, you're old enough. If you wanted to go and help you should have" – that didn't really sit too well. We nearly got kicked off the programme ... But at least we could've gone home with our heads held high ... They gave us a warning... and let it go ... It made the guys that had paid the full amount look upon it as there was one rule for them and another rule for us'

The interviewee went on describe how this created a rift between the two groups:

'There were two people that were really vocal about it. Like they came from really, kind of, upper middle class backgrounds; they'd gone to really good universities, things like that... They

2. Because of the level of detail, we have not attributed this quote in order to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

were the two main ones really, kind of, hounding us for it... It made everyone out there from the YDP think that we have to really watch ourselves... Like the guys from the YDP, definitely, we all stuck together – 'cause we thought we're completely outnumbered by everyone else here that's paid for it... While I loved being out there, that felt shit because basically people were having a pre-judgement of what you're like... It didn't help feelings of animosity towards us but at the same time it helped us, because after that we thought right, well, if they're going to be so petty about things like that, let's just give them no reason to ever have to be like that again... let's just completely outshine them... Everyone on the YDP completely after that just blew them out of the water'

As the above example suggests, some participants felt that the label YDP resulted in them being stereotyped both by other venturers and by Raleigh volunteer staff. There was some anger about YDPs being treated differently to the self-funders. Others responded by rejecting the label YDP, and explaining that they did not really fit into the category of 'disadvantaged' people that the Programme was intended for.

And so it appears that qualifying as a YDP has been a mixed blessing for people involved over the years. While the Programme has opened up opportunity, the explicit distinction between YDPs and self-funders has at times felt divisive and left people feeling stigmatised:

'On one level it's really good because you get to meet people that you'd never meet and walks of life that you wouldn't socialise with... but at the same time those walks of life have a preconception of you and your background and so that can throw up other sorts of weird things... in terms of the group dynamics and things like that' (Interviewee E, female, 2000)

This tension has been highlighted by previous research into interventions for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds: 'Persons and families belonging to such "disadvantaged groups" are frequently pathologised or characterised as "deficient"...or "in need of help"...The individualising approach and legitimising of "action programmes" make young people experience their status of disadvantage in a very contradictory way. On the one hand it may open up opportunities – on the other hand it can be stigmatising' (Bendit and Stokes 2003: 266).

Skills, education and career development

As discussed in Chapter 1, it has been argued that overseas placements can increase the social mobility of young people from less affluent backgrounds, particularly those who are 'NEET' – not in education, employment or training – through helping them to develop their skills, employability and career prospects. Our empirical findings supported this.

Confidence and skills

Research participants were extremely enthusiastic about the role that Raleigh had played in developing their confidence, with 94 per cent of survey respondents reporting increased confidence in their own abilities as a result of their participation. As described above, for many Raleigh particularly increased participants' confidence in dealing with people from different backgrounds. Related to this, participants reported a significant increase in their interpersonal skills as a result of participating in Raleigh, with 88 per cent saying that their ability to communicate with other people increased. There was clear evidence that participating improved both team working and leadership skills. 89 per cent of survey respondents reported an increased ability to lead or encourage others and 87 per cent an increased ability to work as part of a team:

'It made me understand quite a few things – like you're nothing on your own... a team is just like one big person altogether' (Interviewee F, male, 2004)

Participants said that Raleigh had a lesser impact on their vocational skills as compared with soft 'interpersonal' skills.

Education and career

Participants described various ways in which Raleigh helped them in their subsequent education and career. In particular, a number of participants described how participating stimulated their interest in thinking about having a 'direction' in relation to their career, which was something that they had not considered before. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that participating in Raleigh had increased their motivation:

'You look for challenges, you look to be achieving stuff, you look to have things planned and be working towards things – I think it was the start of that sort of cycle – you know, having things planned' (Interviewee G, female, 1989)

'I have found it easier to make a change in direction... hell, actually having a direction. I know where I want to get. I know what I need to do to achieve that. And I found it much easier once I had reached that point to actually get something done' (Survey respondent no. 69, male, 1998)

Survey respondents reported that Raleigh had a major impact on their career ambitions and interests: 83 per cent said participating in Raleigh increased their career ambitions and, when asked more specifically, the greatest interest that Raleigh stimulated was in working in countries outside the UK (83 per cent) and in working in youth or community work (75 per cent). Raleigh also increased many participants' interest in working in environmental work (69 per cent) and international development work (75 per cent). A number of participants described how Raleigh had stimulated their interest in pursuing particular careers:

'Raleigh helped me realise my calling in life, and that it was achievable, even for someone from my background. When I returned from expedition I enrolled at a local educational project, progressed to adult evening classes, took that further to complete a college diploma and now it's been a year since I went to uni to do a BA (Hons) degree and I'm slowly progressing in my chosen career' (Survey respondent no. 60, male, 2002)

The opportunity to mix with people who had been to university encouraged some participants to believe that they, too, could succeed in higher education and raised their awareness of the benefits of this.

While Raleigh clearly expanded participants' aspirations and increased their self-confidence, our evidence suggests that people differed in the extent to which they were able to translate this into concrete career outcomes. Some participants described specific ways in which their participation with Raleigh had helped them to gain employment, for example through leading to specific placements, further volunteering or through gaining paid employment with Raleigh or one of its partner organisations. Some also said that employers were impressed by their involvement with Raleigh, which helped them to get employment.

However, while many participants were motivated by their expedition to develop a long-term plan or to seek out new opportunities, there was another group of people who said that they developed a sense of restlessness after returning, which had made it difficult to settle into working life:

'Trying to adapt back into the life I had before...I'd say I've never really managed it – that's probably why I have had so many jobs and I've moved to so many places... and that's probably from Raleigh. It probably all stems from there' (Interviewee N, male, 1996)

These participants felt that their experiences with Raleigh were very far removed from their current work. For some, Raleigh had raised their aspirations to do work which felt

“The opportunity to mix with people who had been to university encouraged some participants to believe that they, too, could succeed in higher education”

meaningful and interesting. However, this had not been matched by opportunities after they returned home, which was frustrating.

Understanding different impacts in the context of participants' lives

Throughout this chapter we have highlighted differences in the way that Raleigh affected participants' personal development. In this section we explore three of the contextual aspects of participants' lives – both before and after their expeditions – that go some way to explaining these differences:

- a) Social support
- b) Opportunities at home
- c) Drug and alcohol issues.

Box A describes the contrasting stories of Brian and Claire as examples of these differences.

Box A. Brian and Claire: contrasting stories of two participants

Brian described his home area as a place with little opportunity. He explained how the lack of things to do other than drinking meant people like him got involved with all kinds of trouble. The opportunity to participate in Raleigh was unique because it enabled him to escape from this environment:

'There were a lot of people who were made up that I was going and that I weren't stuck at home, doing the same old thing, getting into trouble all the time...or drinking, cos there's not much to do by ours, apart from go for a bevvie'

While participating in Raleigh offered Brian an escape from this environment, he found that the same problems remained when he returned. His mates were still involved with the same old things and quickly expected him to conform to old habits:

'They weren't even bothered like, it was as if I'd never been away... That's what it's like...you come back and you're like I'm home and they're like "have you been away somewhere?"; like they won't even acknowledge you've been away. Crazy'

Brian's response was to want to escape again. He described returning home as 'the worst thing ever' and said that he could have lived in Zimbabwe. He got the 'travel bug' and spent subsequent years travelling and working, moving from job to job. While Brian felt that his experience with Raleigh was very positive, he was unclear about what he had learnt or about how Raleigh related to his subsequent working life.

In contrast, Claire described growing up in a close 'working class' family with a strong work ethic. She described having many part time jobs from a young age as well as being encouraged by her parents to get involved with different hobbies. While her school was unsupportive in terms of thinking about careers, her parents were very concerned to ensure that she developed a sense of direction:

'Basically I would say we had a very comfortable, very strict upbringing cos there was no way my mam was gonna let us leave school and not have a job. You know, she would have made you fill in application forms from morning 'til night. My dad is quite active and sporty and had quite a lot of interests that came with him from his upbringing... he always has a hobby on the go and I think that was reflected through mine and my sister's upbringing'

Claire's family and friends were supportive of her decision to go on an expedition with Operation Raleigh. She became involved with Raleigh through the apprenticeship that she was on at the time. She described how important her employer's support was to her both before and after the expedition:

'[My employer] wanted regular reports of where we were up to with the sponsorship and stuff because we weren't allowed to fail!... They probably would have come up with ideas to help you if you'd got stuck.'

'We came back and we got put straight on a training course... And obviously work needed feedback, they wanted presentations'

Claire described multiple benefits of taking part in Raleigh, in terms of meeting people outside her social circle, widening her horizons, giving her a sense of control over her life. She also said that employers viewed her more positively because she had been on Raleigh:

'I think it taught me that you can achieve anything that you want to achieve and gave me a sense of independence where if I want to do something I just go and do it... you look for challenges, you look to be achieving stuff, you look to have things planned and be working towards things – I think it was the start of that sort of cycle – you know, having things planned'

Social support

The level of support that participants received after returning from their expedition clearly influenced how Raleigh affected them. One way of understanding this is to examine the context of accounts of rites of passages and psychosocial models that look at how individuals cope with so-called life events. A common theme from this theoretical literature is that successfully coping with transitions occurs in a number of phases, which include dealing with separation and loss, a testing or exploratory phase and finally a phase of integration or incorporation into a new post-transition reality (Beames 2004, Sugarman 2001).

Previous research suggests that this final process of integrating can be particularly problematic for a person if members of their existing networks are unable to respond to that person's changed needs (Cotterell 1996). This was a theme among some of our participants:

'Before I went on Raleigh I was the sort of person that liked going to pub – I used to go nightclubbing Thursdays, Friday nights, Sunday was a day of rest, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday was like pub and pool, and ... before I went on Raleigh it got even worse than that. But as soon as I got back, I weren't bothered, I weren't bothered about nightclubbing, I weren't bothered about going to the pub. I still like a good game of pool though. But I... didn't want that. And [the people back home] noticed that and they still wanted that life and I didn't so I was thrown to one side... If I talked to people about what I did at Raleigh, it's like beyond their comprehension, beyond like you know, like "why you?", "why you, why did you do it?" and you know "what have you got that we haven't got? Why?" It was about five years before I managed to adjust back to life again because I felt like I had to do something else. I did do – I worked in Japan for a bit' (Interviewee L, male, 1994)

Overall, 65 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh impacted on their friendships, contacts and networks in the long term. However, the survey findings also suggest that Raleigh had less of a long-term impact on friendships, contacts and networks compared with the impact on other areas of respondents' lives.

Where participants had become distanced or alienated from their peers at home, they felt that they needed alternative sources of support. While 81 per cent of participants said that Raleigh greatly increased their friendships with people from different backgrounds, a lower percentage reported an increase in the number of contacts they can call on for help and support (55 per cent). A number of interviewees talked about how they had gradually lost touch with others from their expedition as the shared memories of their experience faded and people went off to lead their own lives.

We found that participants who had ongoing contact with organised, regular, local Raleigh or Motive8 groups found that this helped them cope with the transition to normal life after their expedition. Those participants who had been involved with local groups said how important this was as a source of support. A few participants expressed concern or regret about local Raleigh or Motive8 groups having been shut down:

'Then came back to London [after the expedition] and just thought "oh post holiday blues"... That was when Motive8 was closing down, and they had a little bit of a follow up programme but not quite. So it was quite hard for people coming back because you've had all this support, you've had these wonderful times and suddenly you come back to reality' (Interviewee H, female, 2006)

Some participants explicitly said that they would have liked more support after returning from expeditions:

'I think the support you receive when you get back needs to be improved' (Survey respondent no. 78, female, 2002)

'I don't feel there was much support after returning home. After being away for so long it was hard to "simply" slot back into my old life' (Survey respondent no. 95, female, 1998)

Opportunities at home

Another key factor in understanding the differences between participants' experiences is the extent to which opportunities were available to them after returning home. As has been described above, the participants involved with the Youth Development Programme and its equivalents have come from very different backgrounds to self-funders. We note above that some people were much more able to capitalise on their experience with Raleigh and use it in relation to their career. The difference between people's experiences was described by one survey respondent:

'Raleigh has been the most amazing experience of my life and I loved every minute of it. However, I was always wanting to come back and get a job and had an idea of what I wanted in the end but for a lot of my friends whom I met through Raleigh it wasn't the same case and I think that some of the course before heading out should be trying to enable people to get back into work or college and not solely preparing us for expedition' (Survey respondent 47, female, 2005)

We found that those interviewees who subsequently moved into careers in graduate sectors were most able to describe direct links between their participation in Raleigh and their subsequent career success. This was both in terms of employers recognising the value of what they had achieved with Raleigh and also in terms of being able to apply the skills they had learnt in their career. In contrast some interviewees now working in non-graduate sectors said that employers had not heard of Raleigh, and did not understand what they had achieved. This supports previous research that suggests that gap years are more of an advantage for graduate employees than for young people on the training track seeking employment in non-graduate sectors (Jones 2004):

'If I went for a job and they went "oh, what's Raleigh International? Is that something to do with bikes?" I says "no". So I told them "it's community conservation work in rural parts of Zimbabwe". "Oh, what did you do?" "We helped build clinics... and shelters to protect them from elephants..." And he was totally [whistles], straight over their head. Even if you gave them the paper work and says "Here you are, this is the leaflet. This is the sort of things we did", they were like "Oh, so what did you do in your last job then?" Not asking any questions... So people will go straight past Raleigh and go "oh, you've done Duke of Edinburgh" and Duke of Edinburgh was a piece of – easy as anything – compared to Raleigh' (Interviewee L, male, 1994)

Previous research has suggested that young people who are able to afford, and therefore capitalise on, social and cultural resources such as a gap year are at an advantage (Heath 2005). It has been argued that organisations that provide subsidised opportunities, can redress this inequality and enhance the career prospects of 'NEETs' (Jones 2004, Russell 2005). Our findings suggest that providing these opportunities to young people from less advantaged backgrounds does help improve their career and educational prospects in a range of subtle ways, such as by increasing confidence and aspirations. However, we also found that in the long term, young people also need supportive structures and opportunities in their home environment in order to build on these experiences. As has

been noted by previous research into youth transitions: 'Resourcefulness depends on the resources that are available to that young person, both in the present and in the past' (Henderson et al 2007: 13).

Drug and alcohol dependency

As was discussed in Chapter 1, recent policy research has argued that young people with drug and alcohol dependency are less likely to benefit from lower level interventions such as organised activities and trips but rather need more intensive interventions from professionals.

Our findings were mixed in relation to this. Many of the research participants said that they had experienced problems in relation to drugs or alcohol prior to going on their expedition. Some participants also said that they had suffered from mental illness. We found that each of these young people had very different experiences of Raleigh and that it was very difficult to draw general conclusions about the effectiveness of Raleigh for this group.

One group of people said that participating in Raleigh had helped them to cope with or to overcome drug and alcohol issues:

'I joined as a YDP. I came from rehab and had no idea how to progress in my life. Raleigh helped me to reintegrate and work with difference' (Survey respondent no. 16, female, 2000)

However, others said that they really struggled to cope in an environment where they were expected to go 'cold turkey' and one of the people we interviewed had been sent home for drinking. We were also told a number of stories about venturers buying drugs from locals. Some of these participants suggested that they would have liked more help in dealing with these issues before, during and after their expedition.

Finally, we found that issues relating to drugs and alcohol were much more of an issue for people who went on their expeditions more recently. This may be because drug and alcohol use among young people is increasingly common (Henderson *et al* 2007). However, it is likely to also be a reflection of changes to Raleigh's selection processes over the years.

Summary of key findings: personal development

- 83 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh had a long-term impact on their personal development. Some participants said that Raleigh had transformed their lives, particularly through enhancing their sense of wellbeing and their ability to cope with difficult things that happened to them. 79 per cent of survey respondents said that their sense of having control over their lives increased as a result of Raleigh.
- The experience of being in an unfamiliar and extremely challenging environment was an important contributor to personal development. 81 per cent of survey respondents said that being in a remote environment where it was necessary to be self-sufficient was a very important part of their overall experience. The challenging nature of the environment helped people to break away from destructive influences and patterns of behaviour in their home environments, widened their horizons and enhanced their sense of achievement.
- Participants had mixed views on the level of adventure and risk they felt they should be exposed to while on expedition. This was in part a reflection of the different backgrounds and experiences of the research participants. It also highlights the difficult balancing act that Raleigh has to strike between providing adventure and guaranteeing safety.
- 76 per cent of survey respondents said that being with people from different backgrounds from their own was an important part of the Raleigh experience. Some participants said that mixing with people from different social backgrounds challenged their preconceptions and raised their aspirations. However, others found these relationships more difficult, and felt stigmatised as a result of being a 'YDP'.

- Participants said that their confidence and interpersonal skills were greatly increased as a result of their experience with Raleigh. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that their confidence in their own abilities increased as a result of participating. 89 per cent reported an increased ability to lead or encourage others and 87 per cent an increased ability to work as part of a team. There was therefore clear evidence that Raleigh helped participants improve both their team working and leadership skills.
- A very high proportion of survey respondents (83 per cent) said that Raleigh had increased their career ambitions. 83 per cent of participants reported increased interest in working in countries outside the UK and 75 per cent reported increased interest in working in youth or community work. The extent to which people translated this into specific employment outcomes varied according to their personal circumstances.
- The opportunity to mix with people who had been to university encouraged some participants to believe that they could succeed in higher education. Some participants reported becoming more aware of the benefits of further and higher education as a result of their Raleigh experience.
- The ways in which Raleigh impacted on participants' personal development depended on the levels of social support and the opportunities that they could draw on back at home. 81 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh had increased their friendships with people from different backgrounds. However, some participants also described the difficulties of relating to people from their home communities after they returned from expedition.
- A number of participants said that they had previously had dependency on drugs and alcohol. Some of these said that Raleigh played an important role in helping them overcome these problems. Others felt they needed more support before, during and after their expeditions in order to cope with the issues that this raised.

5. Global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness

In Chapter 3 we outlined recent political and academic debates about the role of overseas placements in relation to global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness. In particular we highlighted how academics working in international development have assessed and critiqued international volunteering according to particular criteria. While our own research participants did not explicitly use the language of ‘global citizenship’ and ‘cross-cultural awareness’ there are some key themes arising from our research that relate clearly to these agendas.

What participants said they learned

Overall, participants talked in general terms about how Raleigh had raised their awareness of the world. A common theme was that their ‘eyes had been opened’ and their ‘horizons had been broadened’. Many described how their experience with Raleigh had increased their interest in what goes on in other countries. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that their understanding of other people’s cultures and backgrounds had increased as a result of participating in Raleigh:

‘Raleigh opened my eyes and mind to the world around me and I can’t thank them enough’ (Survey respondent no. 103, male, 1994)

Participants also reported that the opportunity to spend time in a developing country raised their awareness of inequality and poverty. 85 per cent of survey respondents said that Raleigh had increased their awareness of inequality in the world. Many interviewees talked about gaining first-hand experience of problems to do with health, education and violence in the communities they visited.

Participants described a growing awareness of the material wealth of people in the UK in comparison with the countries they visited. Most interviewees talked about how their experience made them more appreciative of their own lives and circumstances, and a strong theme was that this gave them a new perspective on themselves as being ‘lucky’: 83 per cent of survey respondents said that their sense of being lucky in comparison with people from developing countries increased as a result of their expedition:

‘I suppose I actually learnt the importance of quite a lot of things that we take for granted, and we take so much for granted. We take running water for granted, we take toilets, all our sewer systems, everything along those lines, being able to pop down to the shop and get food, not having crazy animals that can kill you everywhere – and if you get [bitten] by one of these things, you’ve got two hours to live and the hospital’s two hours away. And the majority of these people don’t have cars, if they get [bitten] by a snake, they’re dead, that’s it, you know, they’re going to die or else suck it out and then you’ve got the threat of big ghats and oh, it’s just never ending!’ (Interviewee A, male, 2002)

Participants seemed to respond to their encounters with poor communities in two key ways. Some described how seeing communities who have less basic material comforts gave them a new appreciation of the luxuries that they have back home. Others said that they felt the communities they encountered had less but were happier and more content than people in their home communities. This made them question the materialistic and consumerist culture of society at home:

‘I learnt that happiness often comes from simplicity and having to share. I think in a lot of ways people from developing countries have more “real” wealth and are generally more content’ (Survey respondent no. 105, female, 1998)

These differences were reflected in survey participants' divided responses when asked about the impact of Raleigh on their attitudes to consumer goods and material possessions. While 25 per cent reported that the value they place on owning consumer goods and material possessions had increased as a result of participating in Raleigh, 35 per cent reported that it had decreased.

'They were really lovely. And led quite simple lives really, a lot of them lived quite simple lives but it just, you know, you can learn a lot from that, can't you? And I think I did learn a lot from that because I think we get so caught up in this country about, you know, always wanting material things – always wanting bigger houses, always wanting better jobs, always wanting more money, you know, and they don't necessarily bring happiness'
(Interviewee J, female, 1991)

The kinds of 'understandings' that participants developed

The existing literature on the potential educational benefits of schemes such as the Raleigh Youth Development Programme leads us to look beyond participants' explicit accounts of what they learnt to the following questions:

- How did participants conceive of their relationship to the host communities?
- How far did participants' experiences help them to understand the political, economic and historical contexts within which they were working?

Relationships with host communities

As discussed above, it has been argued that gap year providers have implicitly concurred with outdated models of international development, which assume patriarchal and oversimplistic relationships between Western volunteers and host communities. Some researchers have accused gap year organisations of adopting simplistic stereotypes of developing communities as 'poor but happy' or 'needy and grateful' (Simpson 2004). We found that some participants did generalise about host communities in these ways:

'The locals were lovely and just so pleased to see so many faces and get some help with the jobs that needed doing'
(Interviewee C, female, 1989)

'When you work with people who have nothing but are still smiling it makes you appreciate how lucky you are'
(Survey respondent no. 44, male, 1998)

However, while some participants did portray themselves as helping needy and grateful communities, others questioned this relationship and portrayed the locals as experts in their own lives, humouring the naïve and inexperienced Raleigh volunteers. When asked what the locals thought of him, one interviewee responded:

'Idiots, white idiots. Lazy, you know especially in the first phase, they've just kind of gone "who are these numpties?". But they appreciated that we were there to help' (Interviewee A, male, 2002)

Participants were also extremely positive about the opportunity to work alongside venturers from the host countries and to work with international venturers, who came from all over the world. They saw this as an important opportunity to learn from each other and emphasised how important the personal relationships were that developed. 83 per cent of survey respondents said that spending time with people from the host community was a very important aspect of their expedition.

We also found that many of the YDP research participants identified themselves with the 'locals' rather than with the British 'self-funding' venturers. For example, interviewees contrasted the warm relationships with the 'locals' that they met to the unresolved conflict between themselves and the self-funders. For many participants this was explicitly or implicitly related to social class. For example, one participant described how

he struggled to get on with the type of upper-class people who were on the expedition from the UK but that the locals were the type of people he was used to getting on with:

'I used to sit with this blind fellow and he spoke dead good English...that was one of the phases when I didn't get on with most of the people 'cause they were all snobs' (Interviewee B, male, 1996)

This might be understood as a key difference between Raleigh's work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the kinds of gap year schemes that have been the focus of academic research on 'volunteer tourism'. Existing research into schemes for middle class participants has described a clear distinction between the volunteers and the community being encountered. For example, in her analysis of interviews with middle-class gap year students, Simpson found that these young people tended to view 'poverty' as an experience 'confined to the foreign "other"', which differentiated them from the communities they encountered' (Simpson 2004: 210). This was not the case with our research participants. We found that participants expressed a much more complex sense of 'difference', in which the class differences between themselves and the 'posh' UK venturers superseded the cultural differences with the host community.

Understanding contexts and structures

Participants explored the links between developing and developed countries in a number of ways. First, a number of interviewees identified commonalities between the problems they identified in the host communities and problems in their communities at home. This was described in terms of their personal, subjective experience. For example, one person described how problems with alcohol abuse in the Aboriginal community that she visited took a similar form to problems she saw in her local community at home:

'We went to the Aboriginal mission and that was really weird 'cause, I don't know how you expect Aborigines to be, but this was a very sort of – there was some local traditions but basically they've adopted alcohol and they drink and they fight and it's – I suppose really doing the job I do, they're a little bit like – although they were self sufficient – they were a little bit like the mentality of some of the people that you find on the estates' (Interviewee G, female, 1989)

Second, participants were reflective about the purpose and value of their projects for host communities. A number of people had thought critically about the overall organisation and sustainability of the expedition tasks, particularly the extent to which they actually benefited the host communities. Some participants were critical of the lack of information they were given about the long-term development of the projects:

'I personally wanted to go to do a community project that would help people. Something that I could look back on and know that I'd done some good. Unfortunately the hut ended up under water! It was more of a scientific project than a community project in the end. And you didn't get a choice; you were put in a group... And it is a slight regret that I didn't get to do anything, cos even as like a secondary project we went to the glacier and did a bit of ice climbing so it still wasn't really benefiting anyone' (Interviewee K, male, 1989)

'I just used to picture it as all these mad Western white people arrive and build this big school and, you know, have these mad times with us and play on these fields for a month or two months or something and then we just disappear and you're left with this school and this whatever... But I wonder if they talk about it?... For Raleigh's part there's no kind of follow-up with the community that you left – you don't know about them and you wonder about them' (Interviewee E, female, 2000)

“Some participants were critical of the lack of information they were given about the long-term development of the projects”

Participants were reflective, to differing extents, about their own role as a Western volunteer involved in ‘development’ work. Some talked with regret about their lack of prior knowledge about the place they visited and said if they were to do it again they would have researched more beforehand:

‘[If I were to do it again,] I think I probably would have understood more about the course and what it was because of being older and having more experience... because it was an adventure, that’s what it was for me. You know it wasn’t work, it wasn’t – but really we were doing conservation, we were working, we were doing all those things. And I think I probably would have taken more of that information in had I been a bit older... or done a bit more research before we went about what we were actually doing’ (Interviewee C, female, 1989)

‘I’d just make more of an effort to know where I’m going – local culture, customs and things. Just ‘cause I may have upset people over there by doing the wrong things and you just don’t know – certain countries, you’ve got to be careful... I’d love to do it again. That’s probably all I’d do different; I’d try to make more of an effort to know where I’m going and try to do something community based, and keep in touch with people’ (Interviewee K, male, 1989)

We found that very few participants explicitly discussed issues to do with social justice when describing their experiences. With a few exceptions, participants tended not to use political or economic language in explaining or understanding the problems they encountered in the host countries. For example, when describing issues relating to poverty and inequality, participants tended not to discuss the reasons for or causes of poverty or to view these issues from a structural or systemic perspective. Participants tended to understand the problem of poverty in developing countries in terms of a deficit of human compassion and kindness and to use language associated with ‘luck’ rather than ‘injustice’:

‘I travelled to parts of the world I would never’ve seen or experienced any other way, I met some amazing people both from UK and Ghana and together I feel we made a difference, however small or big it was a positive difference. I heard you can only change the world with one random bit of kindness at a time... but that sounds good, I thought, and sums up what Raleigh does for me all over the world’ (Survey respondent no. 26, male, 2002)

Long-term impact on values and actions

Overall participants felt that their experiences transformed their views in the long term. 86 per cent of survey respondents said that participating in Raleigh had impacted in the long term on their sense of identity and values.

We found that Raleigh did impact on participants’ future actions but, for most of the group, this was not in the sense of creating ‘champions for social justice and development’ that the Department for International Development would like to see (DFID 2008). Instead we found that most participants viewed volunteering as primarily a philanthropic, altruistic and individual act. Participants talked about being motivated to engage in further altruistic activity rather than being motivated to get involved in campaigning, collective action or any other form of political activity.

This was unsurprising given our finding outlined above, that participants tended not to understand the problems that they encountered in terms of political or economic frameworks. Participants were enthusiastic about international development work as a way of changing the world but tended to view this as a philanthropic activity, equivalent to donating money, rather than a process which is linked to political action or empowerment:

‘I donated to charity for a year afterwards but I thought, you know what, I’ve done my bit, I’ve donated for a year to Save the

Children and I've built a school in Africa. I mean how many people can say that they've built a school in Africa, do you know what I mean? And that's what's really amazing about it'
(Interviewee E, female, 2000)

Finally, participants described how the 'impact' of taking part in Raleigh on their values is very much an ongoing process; they have reflected back on the experience later in their life having acquired new knowledge and understanding. One survey respondent specifically described how she had developed a more theoretical understanding of her Raleigh experience later in life:

'I feel that the impact on my values has only become apparent over the last few years. You absorb so much on an expedition that often it can take a while to understand what you learnt. Studying topics such as Race, Cross Cultural Studies and Hegemony at university saw me referring to moments I spent in Ghana' (Survey respondent no. 62, female, 1999)

This suggests that the educational value of Raleigh is realised later in participants' life, when they are helped to contextualise and reflect on their experiences. It also highlights the way in which the educational impact of Raleigh expeditions is an ongoing process that is difficult to assess in terms of fixed short-term 'outcomes'.

Factors that shaped participants' learning

We found that participants' descriptions of their role in relation to the host communities reflected Raleigh's ethos and objectives. As we discussed in Chapter 1, this has changed over the lifetime of Raleigh from the approach of the original founders of Operation Raleigh which drew overtly on the adventure ethos of explorers and colonists. Currently, Raleigh projects itself as an educational charity with two different objectives: 'making a difference' through sustainable development, and also personal development through challenge, adventure and encounters with unknown places.

We found that both of different objectives were apparent in participants' accounts of their role. For example, Interviewee I gave the following two descriptions of his expedition experience:

'When we were doing the adventurer exercises like trekking in the mountains and canoeing... the whole group I think positioned ourselves as adventurers... and literally when we did the map, when I did the map thing – it was almost unchartered waters and that element gave it an edge'

'Those first weeks spent with Raleigh – understanding its ethos, and its primary objective, which is obviously helping people as well as doing good projects overseas... I will forever be indebted to that opportunity' (Interviewee I, male, 1993)

The different ways in which participants thought about their role were also evident in the survey responses. Respondents were asked to select a number of options for describing their role while on Raleigh; the most popular descriptions were 'a volunteer' and 'an explorer' and 55 per cent of respondents ticked both options.

Many participants appeared to hold two different perspectives on their role simultaneously and at times these sat together uncomfortably. For example, some participants described themselves as volunteers, working altruistically to help the friendly host communities and simultaneously enjoyed telling us stories in which they survived potentially violent and dangerous encounters with local people. So from one perspective participants viewed themselves as adventurers, describing the host community as 'different' and 'unknown' but when talking about their volunteering role, they tended to describe their relationship with the host community in terms of developing mutual understandings.

As we discussed in Chapter 3, the use of developing countries as places where young people can try out activities that they would not be able to do at home has been

“Participants described how the 'impact' of taking part in Raleigh on their values is an ongoing process; they have reflected back on the experience later in their life having acquired new knowledge and understanding”

criticised by people working in international development. It has been argued that this has encouraged people to prioritise their own individual personal development over the needs of the people they are volunteering for. One interviewee discussed how this was a difficult balancing act for Raleigh to juggle:

'I wanted to actually go and talk to the, er, locals and see what their viewpoint was and that's why I went and wanted to give a hand. The one thing I'd say I personally didn't like about Raleigh International was the – it was more like a personal development programme for the individuals doing it. And I wasn't there for personal development. I was there to see what was going on and to give a hand' (Interviewee A, male, 2002)

Summary of key findings: global citizenship and cross-cultural awareness

- Participants reported that Raleigh had greatly increased their awareness of the world and had broadened their horizons. 94 per cent of survey respondents said that their understanding of other people's cultures and backgrounds had increased as a result of participating in Raleigh.
- 85 per cent of survey respondents said that participating in Raleigh had increased their awareness of inequality in the world. This particularly affected people's attitudes towards consumerism, although in different ways. Some participants said that they developed new appreciation of the material comforts available to them back at home. Others said that their experience of visiting poor but happy communities made them more critical of materialistic culture in the UK.
- Participants described the host communities in complex ways. At times, these conformed to stereotypes of communities as 'poor but happy' or 'needy and grateful', which have been critiqued by the international development community. However, other participants questioned these stereotypes and were reflective about their relationships with the host communities. This may have been linked to the strong personal relationship that many participants developed with people from the host communities and with international venturers. 83 per cent of survey respondents said that spending time with people from the host community was a very important aspect of their expedition.
- Many participants adopted notions of 'difference', which were rooted in social class rather than culture. This was expressed by the triangular relationship between themselves, the UK self-funding venturers and the host communities. Some participants felt they had an affinity with people from the host communities, while feeling very different from the 'posh' UK self-funders.
- Participants' understandings of the host communities were rooted in their personal, subjective experiences. For example people identified commonalities between problems they found in the host communities and problems they had encountered in their own local communities.
- Participants were interested in the overall organisation and sustainability of their projects. Some said they would have liked to know more about the countries before they went there and a number said that they would have liked more information about what happened to the projects and host communities in the long term.
- 86 per cent of survey respondents said that participating in Raleigh had impacted in the long term on their sense of identity and values.
- Very few participants explicitly discussed issues to do with social justice in relation to their Raleigh experiences. Participants tended not to use political or economic frameworks in explaining the problems they encountered.
- Participants saw themselves as both volunteers and explorers. At times, these two self-conceptions sat uncomfortably together. This may be a reflection of broader tensions between models of 'personal development' and the values of 'international development'.

6. Civic participation

In this chapter, we explore the extent to which participating in Raleigh impacted on people's participation in 'civic' activities and their involvement in their communities back at home. We discuss the impact of Raleigh in relation to three types of activity that they might get involved with following their expedition:

- Participation in further volunteering
- Participation in local activities back at home
- Participation in politics.

While Raleigh has a general aim of encouraging people to make a difference back at home, it does not have the objective of encouraging people to get involved in any particular type of activity. However, policymakers concerned with encouraging 'citizenship' and social cohesion have stressed that volunteering, community participation and political participation are all activities that they wish to encourage. As such, this chapter is concerned with the broader implications of our findings for policymakers rather than just assessing the impact of Raleigh according to its own explicit aims.

Finally, we describe some factors that affected the extent to which research participants did get involved with further 'civic' or volunteering activities after returning from their expedition.

Volunteering

Our research found that Raleigh had a strong impact on participants' attitudes towards others and their involvement in further volunteering. 73 per cent of participants reported increased participation in volunteering activities as a result of their involvement with Raleigh. Participants described themselves as having developed more philanthropic and altruistic attitudes as a result of their expedition experiences. They talked about how rewarding it was knowing that they had been able to help people less fortunate than themselves. One person even described the feeling of helping people as 'addictive'. Some described how this helped them feel that they could contribute to society and make a difference.

Participation in activities back at home

While many participants said their experiences with Raleigh encouraged them to become involved in volunteering, this was not necessarily in their home communities. Overall, survey respondents did report an increase in their participation in local activities as a result of being involved with Raleigh but our findings also suggest that Raleigh had less of an impact on this part of their life than in relation to their personal development, identity and values. While 92 per cent of respondents said that participating in Raleigh increased their sense that they make a useful contribution to society, a lower number of respondents (54 per cent) said that Raleigh impacted on their participation in local activities in the long term.

Figure 4. The long-term impact of Raleigh in relation to different aspects of people's lives

Did Raleigh impact on your sense of identity and values in the long term?	Yes: 86%
Did Raleigh impact on your personal development in the long term?	Yes: 83%
Did Raleigh impact on your participation in local activities in the long term?	Yes: 54%

This lack of participation in local activities can be explained by the fact that participants had very mixed responses to their local communities upon returning home. Going on their expedition made some participants feel more distant from their communities and networks at home. People described how they found it hard to fit in after returning from Raleigh. For some, this was because they had had unique experiences that others did not understand or because they had become more aware of what was lacking in their community at home through being away:

'I didn't feel part of a community when I got home, I found people more materialistic than when I left, [there was a] lack of community spirit I had in Ghana. People at home were only out for themselves, or as I thought. I was very disheartened in that respect although my memories and experiences from the communities in Ghana kept me going' (Survey respondent no. 37, female, 1999)

'I felt that I was unable to share the amazing experience; this made me a little different so my being part of the community at home was not easy due to no one being able to relate to my experiences' (Survey respondent no. 81, male, 1998)

Some participants described the difficulty in integrating when they returned home as a negative experience which made them feel isolated and unhappy in the long term. This made some of them feel that they wanted to leave their community at home again:

'I think... when you finish Raleigh it's very hard to explain but you feel very alone. You feel very alone, isolated. And so the only thing that you've got is to travel and I suppose that's still with me really. Before, I weren't even bothered, I weren't even bothered even though I could name every country on the map' (Interviewee L, male, 1994)

However, another group of participants felt that these feelings of distance were a positive thing because Raleigh had enabled them to break free of the negative influences and norms that had limited them in the past. The opportunity to escape from usual friends and routines also provided the chance to gain a new perspective on life at home. The home community was described as a place that was always the same and that many people never leave:

'It was quite a big turning point in my life... At some points on the expedition I'd be on my own and I'd have time to think and I wouldn't have anyone else's thoughts messing my head up... like any of my mates like "yeah, come let's do this"... so I got my head straight' (Interviewee F, male, 2004)

'I felt I had no community when I came home as I had chosen to leave a large group of people behind as they were a bad influence but with time I have been able to become more active in groups and gather better friends and community' (Survey respondent no. 45, male, 1999)

A number of participants said that Raleigh opened their eyes to the wider world and made them want to help people further afield rather than in their home community:

'On return and at home it has opened my eyes. All I want to do is travel the world. My experience around the UK and other countries would be great for my local area but I want to travel further, gaining more knowledge, then pass it down to others who wish to follow or want help others in remote countries' (Survey respondent no. 88, male, 2002)

These findings suggest that expeditions broaden participants' horizons and therefore encourage interest in volunteering activities beyond their local communities. However, this may not translate into increased involvement in local communities at home. As

“The opportunity to escape from usual friends and routines provided the chance to gain a new perspective on life at home”

described in Chapter 4, we found that expeditions enhance personal development by encouraging young people to look beyond the confines of their local home environments, especially where there have been destructive or limiting influences there. For these young people, it is unsurprising that while Raleigh broadened their horizons and interest in the wider world, it also lessened their ties to the community and networks they left behind.

Participation in politics

We found that Raleigh had less impact on participants' interest in politics or their involvement in political activities than their interest in volunteering. While increasing political participation is not one of Raleigh's objectives, it is an important part of the current policy agenda around young people's active citizenship and is a key objective of the current Youth Citizenship Commission. We found that a relatively low percentage of participants felt that participating in Raleigh had increased their sense of having a say in local matters or decisions affecting them at home (29 per cent) and 26 per cent reported increased involvement in political activities. While these are still significant proportions of the survey respondents, they were noticeably lower than in relation to all the other aspects of participants' lives that we asked about.

We also found that political terms such as 'citizenship' and 'community responsibility' did not hold much resonance for participants. An extremely high proportion of young people – 73 per cent – had become more involved in volunteering through Raleigh but they did not associate this with terms such as 'community responsibility' or 'citizenship'. Just 58 per cent said that their experience with Raleigh had increased their sense of citizenship and community responsibility and 39 per cent said it had had no impact. This suggests that there is a gap between the language and frameworks used by policymakers and young people's understandings of their activities.

Factors affecting participants' involvement in further 'civic' or voluntary activities

Our research participants clearly had different motivations for getting involved with Raleigh. Some became involved because they wanted to improve their own lives. Others emphasised that they were motivated by a wish to help others. These differences were reflected in the long-term influence that Raleigh had in people's lives. For those people who were already orientated towards getting involved in community issues, or working or volunteering in caring professions, Raleigh encouraged them to develop these interests.

Some participants had received information or support from Raleigh in order to help them get involved in subsequent volunteering. These people said that this support was really helpful. Where local Raleigh or Motive8 offices had closed down, participants expressed a sense of regret, partly because these organisations had provided the links to ongoing voluntary activities and they missed this resource.

Summary of key findings: civic participation

- Participating in Raleigh had a very strong impact on participants' attitudes towards others and their involvement in further volunteering. 73 per cent of participants reported increased participation in volunteering activities as a result of their involvement with Raleigh. Participants also developed more philanthropic and altruistic attitudes towards people who are less fortunate than them.
- While many participants became involved in volunteering subsequently, this was often further afield than their home community. One explanation for this is that some people felt more distant from their local communities after returning from their expedition. While some people found this distance difficult, others thought it was a positive development that demonstrated they were moving up in the world and broadening their horizons.
- Participating in Raleigh had less of an impact on people's interest in politics or their involvement in political activities than on other aspects of their lives. The terms

'citizenship' and 'community responsibility' did not hold resonance for participants, even though many were engaged in voluntary activities. Our findings suggest that there is a significant gap between the language used by policymakers to talk about 'citizenship' and everyday understandings of voluntary activity.

- People had very different motivations for getting involved with Raleigh in the first place. This influenced their involvement in further activities. Those people who had been supported by Raleigh to get involved in further volunteering felt that this was extremely helpful.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

In this section we return to our original research questions. We draw out the implications of our findings for Raleigh as it looks to the future. We also return to the policy context, outlined in Chapter 3, and discuss the implications of our findings for policymakers and practitioners working in each of these areas.

While not necessarily representative of the many young people with whom Raleigh has worked over the years, our findings can be taken as indicative of the experiences of the young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have participated in Raleigh expeditions. They also provide insights for policymakers in terms of the role that these types of interventions can play in young people's lives.

Conclusions and implications for Raleigh

Raleigh asked us to research the following question:

What long-term influence has Raleigh had on the lives of people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have accessed Raleigh's expedition programmes over the past 25 years?

Overall, the feedback for Raleigh is positive.

Our findings provide extremely positive feedback for Raleigh from the young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who have taken part in their expeditions over the past 25 years about the role that Raleigh had played in improving their lives. There was also a great deal of good feeling expressed by research participants towards Raleigh and participants asked us to pass on their thanks to Raleigh staff.

In the section below we focus specifically on the few areas for potential improvement which are suggested by our findings to help Raleigh as it looks to build on its good work in the future.

Selection process: Raleigh should continue to negotiate the difficult balance between providing opportunities to young people who may have experienced complex difficulties and ensuring safety 'on the ground'

Raleigh is keen to ensure that the opportunities it provides are as inclusive to young people from all walks of life as possible. At the same time, its primary commitment is to ensuring young people's safety when they are on expedition. We found that Raleigh's current approach towards selection, which has become increasingly open to young people who have had a range of difficult life experiences, is very valuable and important. Many participants felt that Raleigh had played a unique role in their lives, through demonstrating trust in them, not judging them and offering them opportunity. However, our findings also suggest that this balance between providing opportunities to young people who may have experienced complex difficulties and ensuring safety 'on the ground' is a difficult one for Raleigh to negotiate. As has been highlighted, this is a reflection of a broader tension, inherent in expeditions, between allowing participants to experience the challenges that are a fundamental appeal of the experience, and ensuring that potentially vulnerable people are safe while they are away (Simpson 2004).

We found that young people's readiness for expedition is very much dependent on the individual. For example, expeditions have the potential to help young people with the process of overcoming drug and alcohol problems. However, there are clearly risks in terms of sending young people who are not emotionally or physically healthy into places that are challenging, intense and isolated. All potential venturers are currently assessed by a GP before going on their expedition and those who have come through a Youth Partnership Organisation are signed off by a Youth Worker. Our research has highlighted

"People were overwhelmingly positive about the role that Raleigh had played in improving their lives"

“The process of bringing together defined groups of young people from different social backgrounds – the ‘YDPs’ and the ‘self-funders’ – does pose challenges for Raleigh”

the importance of Raleigh continuing to ensure that potential participants are assessed by relevant professionals as part of the selection process. The findings also suggest that young people who have recently experienced drug, alcohol or mental health issues may require specialist support, before, during and after their expedition.

Composition of the expedition: Raleigh should continue to encourage constructive relationships between young people from different social backgrounds

Our findings show the success of Raleigh’s unique approach to youth development, which brings together young people from different social backgrounds and provides an intensive opportunity for them to learn from each other. This has clear benefits in terms of challenging young people’s preconceptions about themselves and others, raising aspirations and helping people learn about team working and leadership.

However, the process of bringing together defined groups of young people from different social backgrounds – the ‘YDPs’ and the ‘self-funders’ – does pose challenges for Raleigh. In particular, some of the research participants felt that being defined as a ‘YDP’ (Youth Development Programme participant) who is disadvantaged had caused them to be stigmatised within their group and left them feeling alienated. This is a difficult tension for Raleigh to respond to; perhaps the need to target opportunities to young people from particular backgrounds unavoidably means that some people feel labelled.

There may be a limit to how far Raleigh can control the group dynamics among young people on expeditions. Raleigh has always taken the approach of being transparent about the different routes through which young people have got involved in expeditions and how different participants have been funded. Our research suggests that this is the best approach, both for building trust, and in order to help people explore their differences openly.

Our research participants also made a number of recommendations for helping to integrate young people from different backgrounds while on expedition. These included:

- Increasing the current proportion of venturers from disadvantaged backgrounds so that they equal the numbers of ‘self-funders’ – thereby helping YDPs or their equivalents to feel less in the minority.
- Increasing the number of volunteer staff who had originally got involved with Raleigh through routes such as the Youth Development Programme and its equivalents. Participants felt that this would have increased staff’s understanding of the issues they faced and helped demonstrate that people from disadvantaged backgrounds can succeed.

However, these options have significant cost implications for Raleigh and may not be achievable for this reason.

Support after the expedition: Raleigh should continue to provide ongoing support to participants after they return from their expedition and, where possible, aim to increase this

Participants who had continued to be involved with Raleigh after they returned from their expedition were extremely positive about the support they received in this way. People said how it helped them cope with the difficult transition back to normal life. This was discussed by people involved with the Motive8 scheme, which explicitly included post-expedition support and activities. Others talked about being involved with Raleigh by helping out at subsequent selection weekends, or through attending fundraising activities or linked volunteering activities.

Our findings suggest that the extent to which participants were able to build on their experiences while on expedition depended on the support and opportunities available to them after they returned home. This was both in terms of the support offered by Raleigh and more widely.

Ongoing support after returning from an expedition was one of the few areas in which some participants said that they would have liked Raleigh to do more:

'I think the support you receive when you get back needs to be improved' (Survey respondent no. 78, female, 2002)

'I think I might have liked some support from Raleigh when I came home but I live in Scotland and I felt like out of reach as nearly everyone had been from London' (Survey respondent no. 45, Male, 1999)

Under 'The role of partner organisations' below we make some suggestions about how partner organisations could contribute to this ongoing support.

***Opportunities for further learning:* Raleigh should explore ways of providing extra learning opportunities for participants who are interested**

Our research participants were greatly affected by their international experience. They reported increased awareness of the wider world and of inequalities between the countries that they visited and the UK. This particularly affected their attitudes towards consumerism. We also found that participants learned about the places they visited in a very personal way, through individual relationships with people from the host communities, and through identifying similarities between their experiences and the experiences of the people they met. In this sense, Raleigh is achieving its objectives of broadening the horizons and global awareness of young people who have not had these opportunities before.

However, our findings suggest that some participants would have appreciated a more tailored educational programme both before and after the expedition that could help them build on the insights they have developed while they were away. Participants said that they wished they had known more about their destination before they went on expedition (perhaps through simple reading materials and presentations from people from those countries). Some also said that they would have liked to have known what happened to their projects in the long term and many expressed concern for – and interest in – the lives of people they met in the host communities. They said it was difficult to keep in touch with the people they met from the host communities and would like Raleigh to do more to support this. This might have encouraged them to reflect on issues around sustainability and to understand more about the ways that international development work affects communities.

***The role of partner organisations:* Raleigh should work closely with partner organisations in order to maximise the ongoing support available to venturers**

Our findings suggest there is an important role for the partner organisations currently involved in the Youth Agency Partnership Programme (YAPP). The more understanding and insight that these organisations have into the Raleigh experience, the better placed they will be to support the young people who take part. One way of developing this might be to encourage youth workers and other professionals involved in partner organisations to go on expeditions as members of staff.

Building up partner organisations' knowledge about the nature of Raleigh expeditions could provide a number of benefits:

- Sending professionals from partner organisations on expeditions could help all the staff on expeditions to have a greater understanding of the contexts that young people have come from, which in turn might help the integration of the group.
- It could enable staff to play more of a role as informal educators, as they would be well placed to help young people make linkages between the issues they experience in the places they visit and their communities back home.
- It could ensure partner organisations are well placed to help young people understand and build on the skills they have developed on expedition and cope with the transition to life back home with the feeling that people in their home environment understand what they have experienced.

Conclusions and implications for policymakers

In Chapter 3, we described the policy and research context within which Raleigh is operating and highlighted the need for our research to be responsive to current political priorities. In this section, we return to this policy context and explore how the lessons from Raleigh's work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can inform policymakers concerned with youth development, international development and young people's civic involvement.

Raleigh offers a type of 'positive activity' that promotes personal development

Our findings support previous evidence of the benefits of overseas volunteering for participants' confidence, their 'soft' skills and their interpersonal skills. We also found that the Raleigh expeditions enhanced people's resilience and sense of having control over their lives, which has positive implications for their long-term emotional health. These findings are consistent with previous ippr research, which found that activities that take place in a group setting, and are organised and purposeful, tend to have the most beneficial impact on young people's personal development (Margo *et al* 2006). Significantly, the Raleigh experience helps to build aspects of self-esteem that the educational establishment is coming to recognise as crucial to success.

As such the opportunities offered by Raleigh constitute the type of 'positive activities' that have been identified by policy researchers aiming to increase social mobility and wellbeing among young people (HM Treasury 2007, Margo *et al* 2006).

Our research highlights the value of experiential learning through expeditions, both in terms of increasing young people's interpersonal skills, and through providing practical opportunities for young people to learn about global issues (see section below on learning about poverty, social inequality and sustainable development). As such it supports the current focus of education and youth policy on the value of learning outside of the classroom (DCSF 2008a).

Some of the young people who took part in this research described their previous lack of interest in or difficulties with education. For many of these young people, the expedition process stimulated their interest in education and learning. It may be that policymakers' thinking about alternative provision for excluded pupils can draw ideas from the methods of organisations such as Raleigh in order to engage these young people in education.

The importance of international experiences for personal development

Within the existing literature about gap years, there is debate over whether international youth volunteering programmes offer any greater benefit to volunteers than schemes in their own country (Jones 2005). Throughout this report, we have highlighted a number of ways in which the international nature of Raleigh's expeditions is important to participants:

- Being somewhere culturally unfamiliar and unknown enhances the intensity and interdependency of the relationship between volunteers
- Surviving somewhere physically and mentally challenging provides an opportunity for participants to develop unique skills, improves confidence and resilience and provides a sense of achievement
- Getting so far away from their home environment broadens participants' perspectives, increases their knowledge of the wider world and their sense of the opportunities available to them
- Leaving their home community provides participants with an opportunity to see beyond negative and destructive influences in their home environment.

As such, our findings support previous research arguing that the transformative impact of volunteering is more acute in international, low-income settings than in participants' home environments (Jones 2005). However, we have also found that sending young people to developing countries raises a number of subtle issues that need to be considered by provider organisations and policymakers.

In particular, there can be a tension between the use of developing countries as places where young people can adopt the mentality of adventurers, triumphing in unknown places, and the educational objective of enhancing participants' understanding of global issues and different cultures. There can also be tensions between the needs of the volunteers and those of the host communities.

One-off interventions need to be linked to long-term support

Our findings are helpful in thinking about the role that shorter-term interventions can play in young people's lives. Unsurprisingly, people's experience of Raleigh varied according to their personal circumstances – and those young people with stronger support networks and opportunities at home were most able to build on their Raleigh experiences.

Our research suggests that intensive interventions need to be combined with long-term follow-up. For example, most participants described the transition to life back home as a struggle. Many people felt that while they had undergone a transformative experience, everything at home had remained the same. Participants also had to cope with the sudden absence of the intensive support and relationships that they had developed in the course of the expedition, during which they had had a clear purpose and structured activities. While many participants said that Raleigh increased their sense of direction, motivation and aspirations in relation to their education and career, their ability to translate this into concrete outcomes such as jobs or qualifications varied.

While some people described specific ways in which Raleigh had helped them develop in their career, others said they were left with feelings of restlessness or disillusionment with their work situation back at home. These differences can partly be explained by the different levels of support and opportunity that participants were able to draw on in their home environment. As a result of this, a strong theme among research participants was that some young people need ongoing support before and after returning from their expedition:

'Raleigh has been the most amazing experience of my life and I loved every minute of it. However, I was always wanting to come back and get a job and had an idea of what I wanted in the end but for a lot of my friends whom I met through Raleigh it wasn't the same case and I think that some of the course before heading out should be trying to enable people to get back into work or college and not solely preparing us for expedition'
(Survey respondent 47, female, 2005)

Clearly, Raleigh has provided different levels and types of support to young people over the past 25 years. Currently, the organisation relies either on Youth Agency Partners to provide long-term support or it does so through its alumni programme. However, when thinking more generally about the role of shorter-term intensive interventions in young people's lives, policymakers and funders need to think about – and plan for – the needs of those young people when that specific intervention ends.

Our findings suggest that shorter-term intensive interventions such as those offered by Raleigh benefit young people in different ways to longer-term youth services. Policymakers should seek to develop policy that is responsive to the differing, long-term trajectories of young people. More cross-department working is necessary to support this. Policymakers also need to consider how best to fund longer-term and shorter-term interventions in sustainable ways. For example, the idea of a time-limited form of community service for young people has been advocated by policymakers from across the political spectrum for many years (for example McCormick 1994), most recently by the Conservatives (Conservative Party 2007, 2008). However, some youth organisations have voiced concerns in response to proposals for a National Citizen Service, arguing that this kind of time-limited approach could potentially divert resources away from less glamorous but vital youth services that work with young people between the ages of 13 and 25. This example suggests that policymakers need to ensure that different types of interventions complement, rather than compete with, each other.

“Policymakers and funders need to think about – and plan for – the needs of young people when a specific intervention ends”

There are a number of ways in which providers of intensive interventions can ensure that these shorter-term activities complement longer-term schemes and youth services:

- Short-term interventions should be closely linked to existing long-term support structures and services, for example by ensuring that organisations running these interventions have strong links with careers, youth and employment services.
- Organisations running these interventions need to plan for young people's transitions back to 'real life', ensuring that they have support in order to deal with the change at an emotional level, to reflect on the things they have learnt and continue developing their skills in their home environment.
- Where possible, organisations should support young people to maintain any new relationships they have developed as part of the intervention, for example through encouraging peer support networks, alumni activities and follow-up meetings.
- Providers of interventions such as overseas expeditions could work with local and national employers to raise awareness about the skills that young people develop through this kind of work. In particular non-graduate employers could be better informed of the value of this volunteering for skills development.
- Other organisations that are highly regarded and trusted by young people who have been involved with them may be uniquely placed to act as signposting or bridging organisations, as Raleigh does. As such they would be well positioned to help young people access other services and sources of support.

Learning about poverty, social inequality and sustainable development

Our evidence provides specific examples of different ways that young people can learn about issues to do with social class. The people we spoke to in this research were from social backgrounds that contrast strongly with those of the middle class young people who have tended to be the focus of existing research into overseas volunteering. Many participants were young people who had experienced a whole range of difficulties, including unemployment, homelessness and drug and alcohol problems, or who had come from 'deprived' or 'working class' communities. They were mixing with young people who were much better off, both financially and in terms of the educational and employment opportunities they had had.

Unsurprisingly, social class was an important and complex theme for our research participants, and shaped their experience of Raleigh. Our research participants repeatedly described the key differences between themselves and others in terms of money, social class and education. Furthermore, some of our research participants felt that the differences between themselves and other venturers from the UK were more significant than their cultural differences with host communities.

Parts of the international development community claim that international volunteering should have particular educational impacts. In particular it has been argued that it can help young people develop more nuanced understandings of issues to do with poverty and sustainability. Historically, there has not been a strong international education emphasis within Raleigh because this has not been its main objective. As such, the participants in this research had not taken part in many educational activities as part of Raleigh's programmes. Despite this we found that participants were engaging with issues relating to the poverty and inequality they encountered. However, this was not through theoretical or political frameworks but through the lens of their own experiences. We also found that our research participants learnt different things from their expedition in comparison to the more middle-class 'gap year' participants who have been the subject of previous studies. Our research participants were already highly conscious of issues to do with poverty, inequality and social class because of their own life experiences. This gave them a particular perspective on the issues facing people from low income countries – and in some cases a sense of affinity with them.

These findings have both positive and negative implications for policymakers. On one hand, they highlight the more intractable ways that social inequalities affect young people's relationships with their peers. However, they also suggest a way that young

people from disadvantaged backgrounds can learn about commonalities between themselves and people from around the world. They also suggest that overseas team-based experiences can help young people from less advantaged backgrounds to reflect on their own position in society.

While Raleigh does not have the objective of promoting international development and social justice issues, this evidence has implications for other organisations and policymakers who do have this objective. We found that participants were concerned about the sustainability and impact of their projects on the host communities. They were also interested in what happened to the individuals they met in the long term. However, we have noted that most participants did not explicitly discuss their experiences in political terms. Their narratives revealed an understanding of the world in which inequalities are fundamentally due to the luck of the draw. Linked to this, in the long term people were motivated to get involved in philanthropic or altruistic activities but were not politicised as a result of their experiences.

Our findings support Simpson's argument (Simpson 2004) that if providers have the objective of raising awareness about international development and social justice issues, they need to build appropriate educational methods into their programme structure. These would need to ensure that participants are made aware of the historical, political and economic context within which they are volunteering and would need to engage participants with development issues. A pedagogical approach such as this could help participants link their particular experiences while on expedition to broader global issues. Pre- and post-programme education could draw on the experience of organisations such as VSO whose Youth for Development Scheme, for example, includes a Global Education Project which begins before going overseas and continues after they return. Providers would also need to ensure that the professionals responsible for supporting young people in the long term have an understanding of the expedition process, and are able to help them reflect on their experiences.

The relationship between international volunteering and local community participation

Our findings suggest that overseas expeditions can help young people to develop a passion for volunteering. An extremely high proportion of our research participants said that they had become involved in further volunteering activities as a result of participating in Raleigh. In particular, we found that Raleigh has encouraged young people to look for opportunities beyond their local communities, and stimulated their interest in further international volunteering.

The corollary of this is that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who took part in Raleigh often had complex relationships with their communities after returning home. For many participants, the expedition provided an opportunity to experience life beyond their home community, and to escape from destructive influences or limitations that they associated with home. We have suggested that, as a result, the expedition encouraged participants to focus on national or international volunteering opportunities more than local activities back at home.

Raleigh explicitly links personal development with international experiences: it encourages participants to 'broaden their horizons' and to develop a more global and cosmopolitan perspective. As such, it was unsurprising that many participants said they were motivated to travel, volunteer or work overseas. Participants also talked about feeling more distant from their communities at home and the difficulties of relating to people there after their expedition. This evidence can also be understood in the context of Robert Putnam's famous distinction between two types of social capital: 'bonding capital' – networks, attitudes and activities that reinforce particular group identities, and 'bridging capital' – which refers to relationships that are more outward-looking and encompass people from many different social backgrounds (Sheldon and Muir unpublished). This evidence suggests that schemes such as Raleigh can help young people to develop 'bridging capital' rather than 'bonding capital'. This in turn can help young people to develop in new directions in relation to education, employment or where they choose to live. However, the evidence also exemplified one way in which

“Organisations concerned with linking overseas volunteering to local community participation might need to explore how local community groups can be more involved in their schemes”

policy agendas promoting social mobility and those promoting strong local communities can pull young people in two different directions (Henderson *et al* 2007).

Organisations concerned with linking overseas volunteering to local community participation might need to explore how local community groups can be more involved in their schemes. This could be achieved by holding community-based events about their work, creating reciprocal links between community groups in the UK and projects being volunteered in overseas, by encouraging adults from these local communities at home to get involved as volunteers and by ensuring that community organisations are involved long term. This might help young people to reflect on the links between the issues encountered overseas and issues in their home communities. It could also help to ensure that young people are supported to build on and understand the relevance of the skills they have developed in the long term.

Altruism and philanthropy, not politics or citizenship

Our research suggests that there is a gap between policymakers’ language about citizenship, civic involvement and volunteering and the language used by members of the public. We found that many participants who were involved in volunteering did not conceive of their activities in relation to ‘citizenship’ (this might to some extent reflect the fact that many of our participants went to school before the introduction of the Citizenship curriculum).

Our findings also reflect another trend that has been identified by people working on issues of political culture and participation. We found that people understood their activities with Raleigh as philanthropic and altruistic rather than as being linked to politics or social action. For example, people tended to describe their role in helping people as a charitable activity, equivalent to donating money. This may well be a reflection of declining interest in politics and political activity among young people (Rogers and Muir 2007).

The tension between ‘international development’ and ‘personal development’

Our findings suggest that Raleigh’s dual objectives of enhancing individuals’ personal development and achieving sustainable international development can be difficult to balance. This is a reflection of broader tensions between the ethos of those working in youth development and the objectives of people within the international development community. For example, we have suggested that there is a difficult balance to strike between the needs of the young venturers and those of the host communities. For many organisations concerned with young people’s personal development, the process of exposing young people to risk and embedding a sense of adventure is a key tenet. At the same time, those within the international volunteering community view the use of developing countries as places where volunteers are allowed to have a go at things they would not be allowed to do at home as a problem. It has been argued that this is a continuation of a colonialist mindset which prioritises the needs of the volunteer over those of the communities they are working with (Simpson 2004). We found that this tension was reflected in our research participants’ confused perception of their role as venturers who were both ‘explorers’ and ‘volunteers’.

Policymakers and providers concerned with these two policy agendas might benefit from working together to explore how best to balance these different objectives. While to some extent this tension is inherent in the inequalities between the developed and developing world, it is important that policymakers and providers ensure that projects and activities abroad are required in those countries, that they are sustainable and that they genuinely contribute to productive outcomes.

Implications for assessing youth interventions

Our research is unique in the way it returned to participants who took part in Raleigh several – in some cases many – years ago. It highlights that the ways that interventions influence people’s learning and personal development are not as part of a straightforward or time-controlled process. Rather, the impact that interventions such as Raleigh have on participants’ lives changes according to their personal circumstances. Assessments that attempt to quantify outcomes at a fixed point soon after they take place are likely to misinterpret the long-term effects on participants’ lives.

We found that the learning that participants did through their Raleigh expedition was ongoing. Participants described how they had reflected back on and developed new insights into their Raleigh experience later in their lives. There are implications here for policymakers concerned with assessing interventions such as this. In particular, it is important that ‘outcomes’ are measured in ways that reflect the ongoing nature of people’s educational and personal development.

While our findings demonstrate the relevance of Raleigh’s work to a range of policy agendas, it is important to also highlight the intrinsic, non-quantifiable value of this experience for the young people who have taken part. As one interviewee emphasised, the uniqueness of the Raleigh experience for each individual venturer is a fundamental part of its value:

‘That kind of memory, the memory of the freedom, great – it’s nice, it’s something I can always hold [on to] and it’s something that no one else can ever understand ‘cause it’s mine’
(Interviewee A, male, 2002)

Where next? An update on Raleigh’s activities

Raleigh has recently appointed a new position of Education and Development Adviser, in a Knowledge Transfer Partnership in collaboration with Birkbeck College, University of London. Employed at Raleigh with mentoring and support from academic staff at Birkbeck, the adviser will work with Raleigh staff and volunteers for two years to develop and implement an accreditation framework. The role will build on the experiential learning model Raleigh has always provided by helping the organisation to better facilitate the learning gained through the expedition experience. The initiative will focus on evaluating the skills and expertise developed on Raleigh’s international programmes within the theme of cross-cultural learning as well as leadership and global citizenship. It will provide participants with the opportunity to return from expedition with an enhanced learning experience and evidence to support it through formal accreditation.

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Appendix: Fieldwork methodology

This appendix provides information on the methodology used in this research, further to the outline in Chapter 2.

Interview methodology

A life history interview differs from the more frequently used semi-structured interview in that it puts greater emphasis on eliciting personal narratives, that is, asking the interviewee to narrate the story of his or her life in all its dimensions. Interviewees were invited to recount events in their life in their own words and in their preferred order without asking them too many direct and predetermined questions.

Interview sampling

We purposively selected interviewees who had gone on their expeditions in different years and who were mixed in terms of their age, gender and geographical location.

Table 1. Summary data on interviewees

Code	Gender	Age in 2008	Year of expedition
A	Male	28	2002
B	Male	29	1996
C	Female	37	1989
D	Male	34	1998
E	Female	29	2000
F	Male	22	2004
G	Female	38	1989
H	Female	28	2006
I	Male	37	1993
J	Female	40	1991
K	Male	37	1989
L	Male	34	1994
M	Male	32	2001
N	Male	29	1996
O	Male	22	2004

Survey sampling

Our ideal sampling strategy would have been to select participants who were representative of the overall Youth Development Programme database in terms of:

- Gender: 70 per cent of YDP participants listed on Raleigh's database are male. It was important to reflect this in our research.
- The length of time that had lapsed since participants had gone on their expedition: sampling according to this variable was intended to enable us to explore the relationship between changes in the structure of the YDP and participants' experiences, to explore the long-term affects of Raleigh for participants who had gone on their expeditions further back in time, and to ensure that our sample included people of different ages and life stages.

Because many of the contact details for participants were either old or incomplete, we were unable to sample participants. Instead we attempted to contact all the participants listed on Raleigh's database. However, despite the fact that we therefore included all the

participants who were willing to take part in the research, rather than selecting a sample, our final sample was fairly representative of the overall database in terms of both gender and the year that participants had gone on their expedition.

Ethical approach

The ethical framework adopted conformed to ippr's ethical guidelines. These are based on the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s research ethics framework and include:

- Ensuring informed consent
- Ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of research participants
- Avoidance of harm to research participants
- Taking responsibility for ethical conduct and ongoing internal monitoring within ippr
- Compliance with the Data Protection Act and other legislative requirements
- Independence of the research and avoidance of misrepresentation or falsification of results.

In addition, this research raised particular ethical issues and a summary of the guidelines used to address these are included below.

During the recruitment process, the researchers did not have advanced knowledge of the circumstances of potential participants. This may have meant that there was a risk of contacting people who were vulnerable or were experiencing difficult circumstances unknown to the researchers. There was also the possibility that in some cases potential participants may have become seriously ill or died since they had taken part in Raleigh.

To address these concerns:

- The researchers explained to participants as fully as possible and in terms meaningful to them what the research was about, who was undertaking and financing it, why it was being undertaken and what the potential outcomes would be. Where the researchers felt that there was potential for harm to the participant, they made a judgement not to include them in the research.
- Research participants were made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish.
- Where the researchers encountered relatives or friends of a potential participant who were no longer living, they explained the reason for contact and why the data was out of date, then ensured that Raleigh's database was updated accordingly.

The interview may have raised painful or sensitive issues for interviewees, particularly in relation to events from the past that the interviewee may not have thought about for some time.

- The researchers explained fully to the participants how far they will be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were able to reject the use of data-gathering devices such as tape recorders and video cameras should they choose to.
- Informed consent was viewed as a process rather than a prior event. Interviewees were asked for their consent at the end of interviews as well as at the outset.
- All interviews took place in the private space of the interviewee's choosing.
- Interviewees were made aware that they could stop the interview at any time.
- All data was password protected and kept in accordance with data-protection regulations. ippr will ensure that all recordings are destroyed once the project is complete.
- The researchers were trained interviewers and as such were fully aware that while the interview may have played a therapeutic role for the interviewee, they were not

professionally qualified to offer any advice or guidance or to play a therapeutic role. All researchers received ongoing supervision from a senior member of ippr staff and discussed any implications arising from interviews with their supervisor.

- For any participants who had asked for support in response to the issues raised in the interview, ippr arranged to consult with Raleigh in order to provide information to the participant about relevant professional organisations.

Finally, interviewees who requested information about getting in touch with Raleigh were provided with an information sheet that did this.