

Raising Aspirations

Earlier this year, 78 young people from five schools in Tower Hamlets took part in a four day project which coached them on business enterprise and personal skills, culminating in a high adrenaline adventure sports day. Those who took part gained increased confidence and leadership skills and will hopefully be inspired to have higher aspirations for the future. The project also made progress in breaking down territorial boundaries between areas with a history of racial tension.

Tower Hamlets is historically infamous as an entrance into the developed world for many generations from Bangladesh, Somalia and other countries. Among the young people of these families, low levels of aspiration and self esteem are accepted as the norm and as such many become involved in crime and disorder.

Business enterprise can be a valuable tool to with which to embark on the mission of challenging these attitudes, by providing a platform of learning opportunities that will enhance their confidence to be the best in life. The activities employed to achieve this goal included a combination of workshops over a series of days, culminating in a leadership and outward bound activity day.



Year 10 students were invited to apply from all secondary schools in the Local Area Partnership (LAP) cluster area 1 and 2. A total of 78 young people were successful in applying for the course, recruited from BGTC, Morpeth, Oaklands, Rianes and Swanlea. 38% of the participants were Asian and 29% were Black, the remainder being White British or White Other. 56% of the students were male.

The project was executed by Abdul Azim, Project Co-ordinator from THSU and by support workers from THSU, Oaklands, Swanlea and Raines. Many delivery partners were also involved, including Emily Stuart and others from Young Enterprise London, who were integral in ensuring a collaborative delivery was carried out to maximise the learning opportunities for all the young people involved

The project was funded by London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Children Services - Extended Services), without the generosity of which the project could not have been possible.

The programme took place over four days with the first three days based at V&A Museum of Childhood and a final day at Stubbers Adventures in Upminster.

Day 1 (Wed 9th April): Students arrived at the Museum from the five different schools and took part in various team building games before forming unique companies. Participants were briefed about what it meant to be enterprising and played a trading game to learn about retail and wholesale. They looked at the concept of 'supply and demand', investors and shares and generally gained an understanding of how the stock market works. In their teams, they decided on a final product idea and received prizes for their efforts.



The Mummy Game was used as a fun ice-breaker

Day 2 (Thurs 10th April): Participants explored further on share trading and also explored health and safety laws, trading standards and consumer rights etc. They then created prototypes with various scrap materials ready for the presentation. To explore advertising, the enthusiastic students looked at examples of adverts and designed their posters. Each of the companies made a presentation to a panel of judges, who announced a winner.

Day 3 (Friday 11th April): The 'Learn to Earn day' discovered aspects of business enterprise skills but was primarily orientated to personal development by exploring themes such as success and what it means to them. Participants made a sculpture, planed and designed a youth centre and set 3 personal goals with feedback from individuals.

Day 4 & 5 (Mon 14th & Tues 1st April): Half the students attended this day on the Monday and the other half attended on the Tuesday. In small groups, they participated in some exciting and challenging activities, intended to bring out leadership, team building and increased self confidence. The participants were able to try out the following activities: 4x4 driving, raft building, jet ski and high ropes challenge.

4x4 Driving: for most, it was the first time they had gone behind the wheel. This increased their self confidence and gave them a desire to look forward to owning a car in the future.

Raft Building: The raft building was one of the most valuable activities where they had to build a raft for the entire group, paddle it in the lake and if possible bring it back to shore. Very few



were able to bring it back as most sank. Overall it was a very fun activity where they communicated effectively and worked collectively to really give it a go.

Jet Skis: The thrill of riding a high speed Personal Watercraft (with an experienced instructor) will be a lasting memory for a lot of these participants. The degree of control of the Jet Ski was challenging as it is capable of high speeds on water.

High Ropes: At a height of 10 metres off the ground, young people were expected to do a series of courses that really challenged confidence and trust. Young people encouraged and supported each other from start to end. The activity brought out the leadership qualities they possessed.



The Students:

- Received intense training from Young Enterprise London of how to start up their own business
- Learnt how to work as a team and independently
- Reflected on how successful they can be in the future
- Took part in presenting prototypes and ideas to a panel of judges
- Participated in adventure and team building activities and increased self confidence
- Received a better understanding on stocks and shares and how the market works

The Raising Aspirations project reached the aim of educating young people in business enterprise and helped reduce racial tension amongst some groups of people in different areas. The success of the project was credited to the involvement of Young Enterprise London, for the invaluable and unique insights into business enterprise and management that we provided. The programme increased the student's confidence and understanding and gave them leadership skills to further enhance their aspirations and raise ambitions in the future.