



YOUNG CHAMPIONS PROGRESS REPORT

Context

Mosaic is a national project, led by the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) that aims to cement long-term sustainable engagement between black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and the National Parks and Youth Hostels Association (YHA) (www.mosaicnationalparks.org/). As part of the new Mosaic project a “transferability” research project is being undertaken to assess the feasibility of extending the Mosaic model to another priority group.

The research is being undertaken with Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities (NPAs) through a 1-year project that started in May 2009 and is led by Mosaic Research Officer David Rolls. If the Mosaic model proves to be transferable, this will provide the background research for a future CNP-led project to roll out Mosaic to a new audience nationally. After consultation with local and national partners including beneficiaries, and with TV presenter and adventurer Ben Fogle at the helm, the initial focus of the project was agreed to be young people aged 16 - 25. The following report covers the first 6 months of the project from May to October 2009.

Summary

18 young people recruited and imbedded into their roles as Young Champions, namely:

1. Exploring their local National Park.
2. Promoting and facilitating activities for other young people.
3. Influencing and changing the way activities and services are delivered in the National Parks



Ash 'Adopts a tree' on Exmoor

Young Champions are all:

- Living or active in deprived wards (Plymouth, Bristol, Exeter, Barnstaple and Bideford), and / or
- Facing challenges such as being new to the UK, learning disability or unemployment.

Programme Activity

The following activity has taken place in the initial 6 months:

42 Promotional Interventions

For example: articles in Bristol-based media Voscur News; presentation to Improving Reach (Black and Minority Ethnic Community Development Network in Plymouth); and a promotional drive at Bristol's City Farms.



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8 Taster Sessions

For example: Environmental games with Y Smart in Barnstaple; YHA mountain biking with Open Space from Exeter; Exmoor quiz at Georges Youth Club in Barnstaple; Conservation activities at Believer Youth Hostel with PEA (Plymouth Environment Action); and a Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust session with V from Plymouth.



Mountain bike taster with Open Space at Okehampton YHA

18 Champions recruited

- 67 % male, 33% female
- 100% are not in full time paid employment
- 25% are in training or studying

Action Planning

4 action planning session delivered with developing clusters of young people in urban areas. Young people have contributed over 50 days of their own time between July and September.

Champion Weekends: Inspire, Taste, Champion

- Dartmoor Champion Weekend delivered in September 2009 at Okehampton YHA with 12 participants.
- Exmoor Champion Weekend delivered in October 2009 at Minehead YHA

Generic Project Activity

- Disability and access scoping workshop delivered with participation from Living Options Devon; Access Forums; the Calvert Trust and the YHA.
- Presentations to National Park Authorities' Officer and Member Groups.
- Promotional activity with SW Protected Landscapes and Outdoors for All (Natural England).



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*Dartmoor taster session with PEA at Bellever YHA.
(The group now undertakes a monthly conservation activity on Dartmoor).*

Champion Overview

Recruitment route of Champion and local mentors	Organisational focus	Location	Champions developing action area
X Centre	Multi media centre	Exeter	Wild food and foraging
Foyer	Supported Housing	Exeter	Promotion/Electronic Media
Open Space (DREC)	BME activity group	Exeter	Intra urban sporting links
Link UP	Learning disability	Exeter	Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust
Headway	Brain Injury support	Exeter	Murder Mystery tours
Plymouth Environmental Action (PEA)	Conservation	Plymouth	Cultural kitchen
BTCV	Conservation	Plymouth	Bellever YHA Wildlife Area
Y Smart	Substance abuse	Bideford	Healthy foods
Georges Youth Club	County Council Youth facility	Barnstaple	Mountain biking
Whiddon Valley	Forches Estate	Barnstaple	Team building
Switch Youth Action (Young Devon)	Youth participation	Bideford	Mystery shopping
Devon and Cornwall Housing	Supported Housing	Bideford	Outdoor survival
Training and certification	Young Champions are working towards John Muir Discovery; V 50 Award and participating in bespoke training programmes.		



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10 Key Themes

1. **Participation works:** projects developed by young people for young people.
2. **Inclusion:** work focused on young people facing the 'double whammy' of living or being active in, deprived neighbourhoods and working with traditionally underrepresented groups such as people with mental health issues.
3. **Cohesion:** huge added value of bringing young people from different backgrounds and cultures together in a team setting.



Team work gorge scrambling on the Young Champions weekend.

4. **Public transport:** all projects are required to utilise public or community transport.
5. **Let's Do It attitude:** huge amount of interest in the National Parks shown by youth workers but lack of knowledge about where to turn for support.
6. **Access:** in terms of physical disability this is still a key challenge to be addressed.
7. **Funding:** Young Champions have to date drawn funding from three external funders. Greater 'Youff proofing' of Sustainability Funds is required.
8. **Information:** the work of organisations such as Active Exmoor is essential in promoting opportunities in an accessible format (<http://www.activeexmoor.com/>).
9. **Partnership working:** opportunity for embedding the National Park's outreach work further into Local Area Agreements and strategic partnerships.
10. **Professionalism:** incredible desire to make it work and go the extra mile demonstrated by NPA and YHA Officers.

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