



Thriving Through Venture 2018 – An evaluation report

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Thriving Through Venture 2018 – An evaluation report

The aim of the programme is to present an opportunity for young people to rise to a challenge that can connect them to their local community and to a different international community and thereby gain a broader perspective on their own world. In addition, the programme hopes to develop self-awareness and resilience whilst creating an understanding of the young people's own purpose and personal values.

The young people were eleven 16-19 years old students drawn from diverse backgrounds in nearby Wiltshire schools. Most of them had been recommended to take part by their teachers who felt that the students would benefit as they had had symptoms of emotional vulnerability.

The method used to deliver the aims stated above within the UK involved the teenagers attending several meetings, a team building weekend in Norfolk, a visit to Bristol to meet Gambian migrants from Gunjur as preparation for the trip in August to The Gambia and attending a Fair Trade meeting. The meetings involved adult-led training sessions in small groups in photography and storytelling and creating a business and visits within the community engaging with residents and workers. The climax of the programme was to apply this training in Gunjur, a large village in The Gambia, as follows:

- Photography – initially taking portrait photographs of retired community members and local tradesman in the UK, then of tradesmen and elders in Gunjur. These linked with the storytelling project below.
- Storytelling – initially interviewing local older residents about their working life in the UK, then older residents in Gunjur and writing up their response.
- Mango business – initially investigating fair-trade businesses in the UK, then writing up a plan for mango exporting business in Gunjur

Following the work in their local UK community, the students lived in Gunjur for two weeks to complete their individual projects. The visit to Gunjur also included visits to learn about different careers: to an eco-hotel to learn about ecotourism and a visit to The High Commission to learn about a career in the diplomatic service and the issues facing The Gambia.

The conclusion of the programme is to exhibit the projects' work and for the young people to share their experiences in their home town at a presentation evening, thereby strengthening their resilience and confidence.

The hypothesis which Thriving Through Venture wanted to explore was *'Can we offer an experience to teenagers who may not normally choose a challenging adventure, which would transform their mindsets and thereby support their future success and happiness?'*

This report aims to summarise the benefits and challenges revealed by the programme and make recommendations for the future development of TTV. *(Supporting documentation is available)*

Section 1. The impact on UK teenagers at various stages of the programme

- a) Impact since January (asked on arrival in Gunjur).
- b) Update feedback from participants, asked mid-Gunjur experience
- c) Update feedback before departing from Gunjur.
- d) KEEP, CHANGE, GROW forms completed on the flight returning from The Gambia.
- e) Additional quantitative data from resiliency scales completed by the participants and a control group at the start of the programme (January 2018) and in June 2018 before the Gunjur trip. The resiliency scale will be completed again in October 2018, post Gunjur and community presentation.

Section 2. The impact on the Gambian partners and community

Section 3. Administration and organisation of the programme.

For section 1 of the report the students were interviewed using pre-prepared questionnaires which can be found in the appendices.

Section 1.

The impact on UK teenagers at various stages of the programme

- a) Impact on the participants so far since the start of the programme in January 2018 (interviews conducted 7th and 8th of August 2018 on arrival in Gunjur)
- b) Halfway through the Gunjur experience
- c) Departing from Gunjur

What follows is a summary of qualitative and quantitative feedback from the students in response to the questionnaires:

a) Impact since January (asked on arrival in Gunjur).

Q1. Why did you join TTV and sign up for this programme?

- An opportunity
- Teacher suggested it
- 'Helping other people'
- Once in a lifetime opportunity
- See Gambian community
- Mango business aspect
- Something fun and challenging
- Push me out of my comfort zone
- Get away from the bubble that is my school
- Want to get out of my comfort zone
- Like to have an adventure and meet new people
- My motto is 'to help people'
- To see Gambia and go away with my friend

Q2. Scoring on thoughts about improvement in optimism etc. (see questionnaire):

- 60% said their optimism was average and had improved since the start of the programme
- 50% said their tolerance of uncertainty had improved
- 50% said their adaptability had improved since the start of the programme with 30% explaining a big shift from a low point in resilience

- 20% of the students felt that the programme had helped them discuss their feelings with others and ask for help, so they can recover quickly from setbacks.
- 60% of the students felt that this programme had helped them be adaptable enough to work with others who were not like themselves.
- 50% of the students said that this programme had given them more of a sense of purpose that helps them consider future plans.
- 40% of the students said the programme had helped them have more of a sense of I'm ok/you're ok with the way they see the world
- 30% stated that they can flip easily from a state of feeling ok to feeling not okay rather too quickly. The programme hasn't seemed to influence this, as yet

Q3. Participants had to say what benefits they had most enjoyed from the programme:

- 50% said it had impacted positively on their **confidence**
- 60% said it had made them more **resilient**
- 100% said they felt it had helped them **connect with a community** – the group and wider communities in UK and Gunjur
- 80% said it gave them more of a **sense of purpose**
- 20% mentioned a significant impact on dealing with **anxiety**

Other benefits mentioned included **business skills** relating to the mango business group and **photography skills** for that group.

Q4. Best moments so far? Responses were:

- Fair Trade presentation
- Arriving at Gunjur - 50% mentioned this
- Link with Abbey Road music production
- Bristol meet up
- Drawing portraits of Gambian partners - 20% mentioned this
- Food
- Interviewing older Gambians – 20% mentioned this
- Market visit
- Meeting Gambian partner
- Norfolk – 30% mentioned this

Q5. How much do you think this programme will help you in future life?

Responses to this were unstructured and unclear as many of the participants wished to complete the programme before feeling able to answer this question.

Q6. If you were running this programme what would you do differently?

- Clearer purpose from beginning
- More meetings for whole group bonding – 40% mentioned this
- Time to discuss feelings
- More freedom – get up later in the morning
- More chance to do stuff ourselves in mango project e.g. problem solving
- Too many emails
- Nothing

- More structure and planned meetings

b) Update feedback from participants, asked mid-Gunjur experience

Structured interviews were conducted with the students.

70% rated the TTV programme as 4.5 out of 5 - Very good to excellent. Participants gave their individual projects the following average scores out of 5:

- Storytelling 4.12
- Photography 5.00
- Mango business 4.50

The students all felt it had been a very worthwhile and exhilarating programme. Favourite things were the school visit, playing games with the children, connecting with their Gambian partner back at the Gunjur Project through socialising, games, swimming etc. The beach walk and fishing village were also very popular.

The students had mixed feelings about the organisation. Some said they liked the relaxed, impromptu nature of the planning but most said that 'lots of hanging around in the heat' was the least enjoyable aspect.

All the students felt they had learnt a lot and grown in confidence during the week.

c) Departing from Gunjur.

At the end of the second week of the Gunjur experience, the feelings of the students were evaluated through structured conversations with Caro Strover based on the questionnaire:

Q2. Please score yourself 1 (low) to 5 (high) for these statements:

a. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	1	1	3	5

Overall, 8 students felt that they could rate themselves as higher than they had previously. 2 rated themselves the same as previously. **80% improved optimism**

b. I can tolerate high levels of uncertainty about situations

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	1	0	4	5

Overall, 4 felt that they were more tolerant of uncertainty this than when previously asked. 6 were the same. **40% improved tolerating uncertainty**

c. I adapt quickly to new situations and I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	1	0	5	4

Overall, 6 felt that they were better at this than when previously asked. 4 were the same. **60% improved adaptability**

d. I find humour in tough situations and can laugh at myself

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	1	0	3	7

Overall, 9 felt that they were better at this than when previously asked. 1 was the same. **90% improved ability to find humour in situations**

e. I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	2	1	4	3

Overall, 4 felt that they were better at this than when previously asked. 6 were the same. **40% felt they were better at recovering from setbacks**

f. I find it easy to work with other people even if they aren't like me

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	1	0	2	7

Overall, 8 felt that they were better at this than when previously asked. 2 were the same. **80% felt they had improved their ability to work with people not like them**

g. I have clear ideas of what matters to me and enjoy thinking about these ideas when thinking about my future

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	0	1	4	5

Overall, 7 felt that they were better at this than when previously asked. 3 were the same. **70% felt more like this.**

h. Most of the time I think that I'm OK and other people are OK

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	2	0	2	5

Overall, 3 felt that they were more like this than when previously asked. 6 were the same. 1 did not respond. **30% felt they had improved their sense of ok-ness**

i. I easily flip from one OK state to another

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	3	1	5	1

Q3. What do you think have been the benefits of this programme for you?

a. Growing my confidence

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	0	4	1	5

Overall, **70% felt that their confidence had gone up** since the last time this was asked. 3 people felt that it was the same

b. Becoming more resilient

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	3	3	0	5

Overall, **80% had felt that their resilience had gone up** since the last time this was asked. 2 people felt that it was the same

c. Connecting with a community

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	0	0	2	8

All participants felt that this had improved since the previous time of asking.

d. Having and understanding the value of a sense of purpose

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	0	1	5	4

Overall, **80% of participants said that they were better at this** since the last time of asking. 2 felt that there had been no change

e. Overcoming anxiety

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
3	1	1	3	2

Overall, **40% of participants felt that they could overcome anxiety better** than when previously asked and 3 said that they were the same. The remaining 3 said anxiety was not an issue for them.

Conclusions from Q3:

There is a clear perception amongst the majority of participants that they have become more confident, resilient, flexible and purposeful during this experience. In addition, other skills were developed such as technical photography skills and business skills.

Q4. What have been the best 3 moments of this programme so far?'

The enjoyment of the experience amongst the participants is evident from the quotations below:

Quotes from participants to evidence the impact:

- I have just loved it
- It's helped me realise how big the world is
- It's been helpful taking a mentor role in the group and this has helped me develop my understanding of others
- It has helped me be able to have a conversation with strangers about multiple things, with confidence
- I have got to know new people and see a different way of life
- It has given me the idea of the need to listen and to value listening
- How it is good when people can accept you for who you are, and how there is respect for self and others
- Friendships
- I have enjoyed the cultural experience

Best memories:

- Walking to the mosque and beach and chatting
- Swimming in the pool with our Gambian partners
- Visiting the school x 3
- Sharing photos with those whose photos we had taken x 3
- Star gazing
- Spending time with everyone and friendships within the UK team and with the Gambians at work
- Feeling comfortable with everyone and liked
- GMGC meeting
- Visiting the partner's compound for lunch x 2
- Calypso restaurant
- 1st day of painting
- Visiting the High Commission
- Meeting our Gambian partners x 3
- Visiting the schools to deliver letter and playing games x 3
- Visiting music school
- Walking on the beach
- Eating fish in the market with the Gambians
- Interviewing Fatou, the elderly market gardener

Responses to 'How has the programme helped you?'

- It has helped me understand the value of family more and that maybe we should learn from that to **show that level of respect**
- **I feel a lot stronger away from my support system at home than I expected**
- It has been so good to see life in a completely different culture
- I feel more confident in situations that are not usual
- I have met people that I wouldn't normally cross paths with and connected with them
- It's given me the understanding of listening and time out and **that I can do things which I am not comfortable about**
- I have developed confidence and I **appreciate what I have more**
- I have learned how **the sense of love and friendship is more important than material things**
- I have enjoyed meeting with a mixed group from Wiltshire and Swindon and with making friends within a different culture
- It has given me **a different perspective on the world** making me more resilient.
- I have learned about business, been good at preparing for the trip independently
- The programme has increased my confidence
- I can look at things from **a different angle and find alternative ways to solve problems**
- It has been good to be in a **situation that you are not certain about**
- It has helped me adapt to challenging and I am **more confident with meeting new people and trying out new things**

Ideas for improvements

- To know more about the main events of the timetable
- Give a choice of activities e.g. museum
- Less waiting around
- Mango business: clearer direction when working on it in the UK
- More free time
- That every Gambian can speak good English
- Have easier days earlier on to help get to know Gambian partners e.g. walking on the beach
- Longer in the compounds for lunch e.g. spend the morning and lunch there

d) KEEP, CHANGE, GROW forms completed on the flight_returning from The Gambia. August 2018

This is the feedback written by the participants on their way home from Gambia.

All comments are single responses unless a percentage is shown.

Which elements participants wanted TTV to KEEP:

UK-based:

- Norfolk weekend (or a weekend to work on projects and get to know the group). 50% mentioned this
- Taking portraits
- Days out e.g. Bristol

- Small team sizes
- The flexibility of the programme and being able to choose which project
- Mix of type of projects i.e. creative and business. 30% mentioned this
- Diversity with different schools

Gunjur-based:

- Eating local dishes 30%
- Having Gambian partners 20%
- Going to partner's compound 20%
- The Gunjur Project Lodge 60%
- TARUD as the main meeting place 20%
- Lunch at the Eco hotel and Calypso
- Creative team activities e.g. painting TARUD (20%) but also more comments about having more of this
- The delivery team and TARUD team
- Free time after return to Gunjur Project Lodge (20%) plus other comments for more free time
- 2 weeks in Gunjur

Which elements participants wanted TTV to CHANGE:

UK-based:

- Include a Music project
- More opportunity (not necessarily project based) to get everyone together more often before the trip, rather than in just our separate project groups (20%) and also includes number of requests for more bonding events – see 'grow'
- More meetings in UK 20% (but shorter) perhaps meeting altogether every two meetings and smaller group meetings in between based on convenient location
- A meeting before The Gambia to go over the detail to make sure everyone is ready and okay
- Make Norfolk weekend earlier to help with getting to know everyone
- Less meetings beforehand
- Make sure meetings are not on exeat weekends

Gunjur-based:

- To have an outline of activities of the two weeks even if it is 'rough'
- Make sure every Gambian has good English
- Some lie in mornings!
- Make projects less intensive
- Less time in TARUD office - 30%
- More time in Gunjur eg 3 weeks
- Have clear information about expectations re. expenditure during the 2 weeks 40%
- Advise bringing more bug spray
- More choice over whom TTV individuals (writers) meet to inspire their response, by meeting greater number of Gambians
- TARUD lunches to provide more of a mix of local and western type dishes over the days, so sharing cultures more 30%
- Not to wait in the sun, improve timings

- Earlier suppers and more snacks
- Get members to vote for activities that they want to do in The Gambia 30%

Which elements participants wanted TTV to GROW

UK-based:

- Greater opportunity to learn Mandinka for those who want to
- More bonding time before The Gambia trip (30%) which were not project related. E.g. bowling activities, adventure courses, dinners
- More whole group sessions and working before separating into project groups (20%)

Gunjur-based:

- More free time with Gambian partners 20%
- Other trips: e.g. visit monkey park, trip to Senegal, visiting river 30%
- More rest time 20%
- More time at beach
- More time with locals e.g. football match 20%
- More whole group sessions and working before separating into project groups 20%
- Increase diversity within group
- Another practical project e.g. more painting, helping at school and clinic
- More planned events in evening at lodge e.g. like the band
- Optional evening events at the Lodge

Please note: 1 person failed to attend the trip and 1 person went home after 2 days. The research was done with all those who attended the whole Gunjur experience.

The following is Inserted and written by Caro Strover, Director who led the quantitative evaluation:

QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE TTV PROGRAMME 2018

DESCRIPTION of the RESILIENCY CONSTRUCTS USED to measure wellbeing of the TTV programme participants and individuals in a control group, using the 'Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents' by Sandra Prince-Embury (published by Pearson), used during 3 testings over the period of the programme – January to October 2018

The Constructs are:

MAS – Sense of Mastery

This is a sense of competency about yourself, important for problem solving and having positive expectations about the future eg having optimism, self efficacy (being able to master your own problems) and adaptability/flexibility ie learning from mistakes

REL – sense of Relatedness

Being able to relate to others in a meaningful and long lasting way constitutes resiliency, as well as having supportive individuals present in times of adversity (research by Werner) eg having a sense of trust, having access to support, having comfort from others

REA – Emotional Reactivity

Being able to modulate and regulate reactivity, regulating attention, emotions and behaviour so individual can function adaptively in emotionally challenging situations eg your sensitivity re the threshold for reaction and intensity of reaction ie being upset easily; the ability to recover and bounce back from disturbance of emotional equilibrium; managing being upset without having impaired functioning

Format: The individual rates themselves using a 0-4 scale on statements that refer to one of the above constructs.

A WORD OF CAUTION:

Limitations of rating scales and questionnaires

The limitation of rating scales and questionnaires for research has recently been highlighted in the article 'Science of behaviour or science of questionnaires' by Dr Alex Fradera in the British Psychological Society's quarterly, 'The Psychologist'- September 2018. This article laments research's overriding use of questionnaires to measure behaviour, rather than observing tangible behaviours. Whilst the article recognises that studying actual behaviour presents far greater challenges than getting participants to complete questionnaires, eg actual behaviour is harder to validate/identify, ethical difficulties and greater expense and effort, there are significant limitations to relying on questionnaire responses. A core limitation is that the answer in the questionnaire will often not match the behaviour that is consequently observed, that the answer will be swayed to represent what the respondent would like to be able to see themselves as ie their ideal self, or even answer to what they think the researcher wants. An example of this is how lottery winners rarely donate cash to charity even though a quarter of survey respondents claim they would give substantial amounts if they won.

We noticed in our research that on 2 occasions the quantitative data clearly did not match the qualitative data. These were male participants in the experimental group: One participant explained on presenting to 100 people about his experience, how he was so much more confident now and that there was no way that he would have been confident enough to stand and talk in front of so many people a year ago. However, his ratings at the end of the programme showed a decline in 'mastery'. And other behavioural observations from parents and school would validate improvement in his 'mastery' and confidence over the course of the programme. A second participant also clearly benefitted from the programme but showed a decline in all 3 areas when comparing first and last ratings. He had learned that he needed to be more assertive and showed increased diligence with his studies and appreciation of his education following the programme.

A third participant showed a decrease in all 3 areas, but had significant and longer term wellbeing issues. It would be interesting to be able to establish whether the programme prevented further deterioration in his wellbeing and whether in the future he will recognise the benefit it may have had retrospectively. Certainly, it was an achievement that he completed the programme.

These 3 participants were male. Males generally rated themselves higher than the females at the start, suggesting that there might have been greater reluctance for the males to acknowledge vulnerabilities at the start (even though the forms were anonymised) or that their self-awareness increased during the programme resulting in the final responses being more honest. At the same time, it is important to note that the final ratings were done during the period in which some of

them were completing university application forms and making important decision, known for being a stressful time.

Awareness of these limitations is very important but in spite of these it is encouraging that the following graphs show a positive picture of the impact of the TTV programme, in both showing positive improvement for individuals, and also reduced decline, the latter suggesting a validation of the preventative nature of the programme

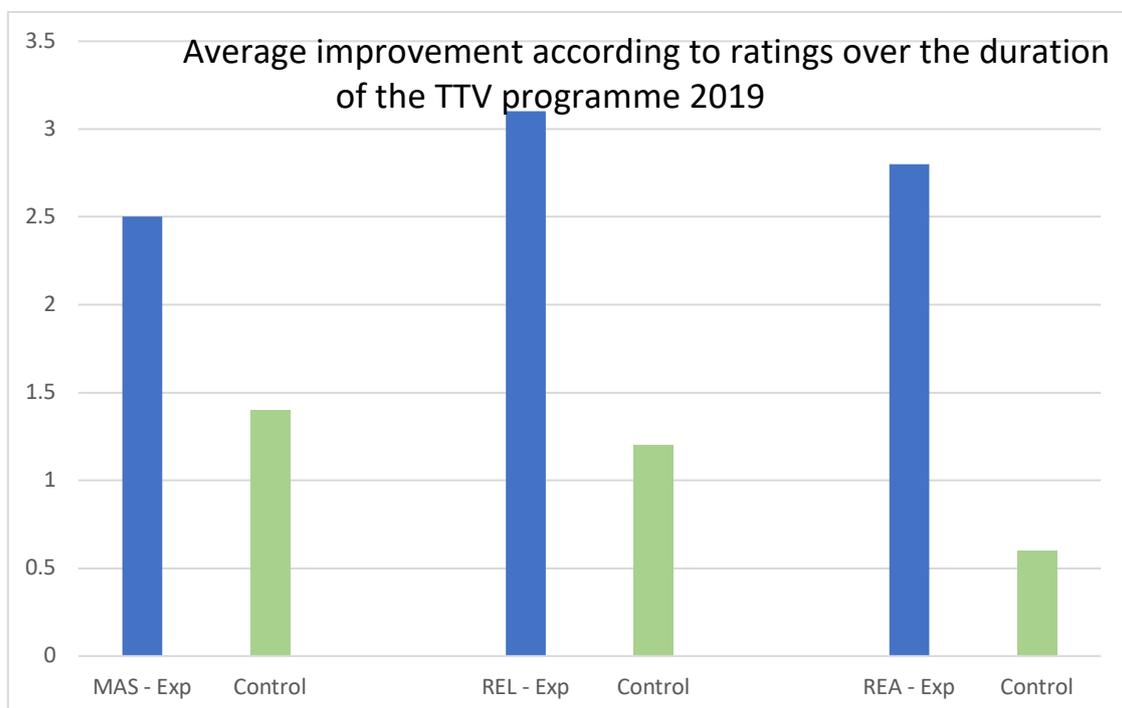
CONCLUSION from the quantitative data:

Comparing the results of the experimental group who participated in the TTV programme and the control group who did not, the results clearly provide quantitative data that strongly suggests that the TTV programme has positive benefits of improving the wellbeing of vulnerable young people as well as having a preventative role for the further deterioration of the wellbeing of vulnerable young people.

THE GRAPHS

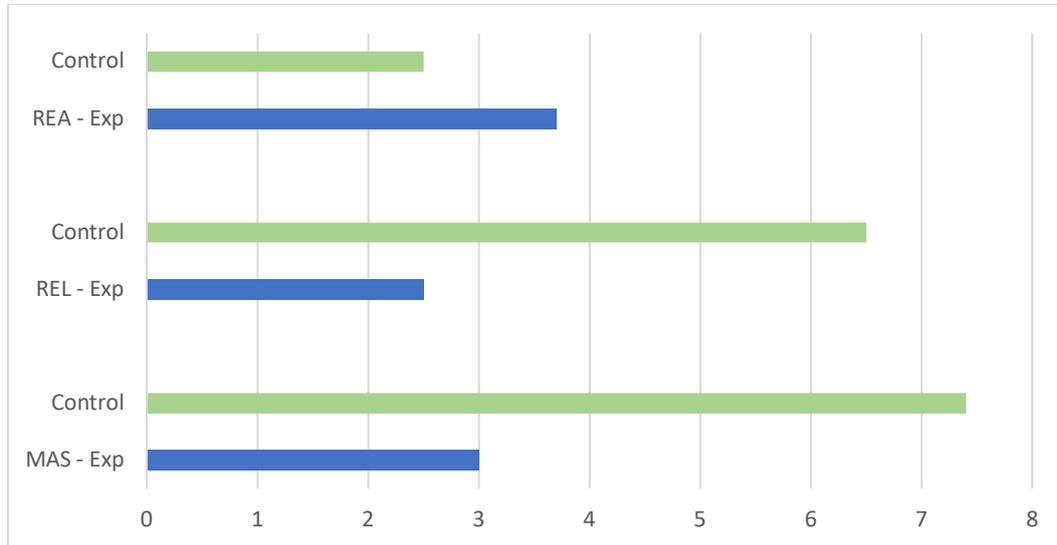
Graph to show the average improvement within the rating scores over the duration of the programme.

Conclusion: The Experimental group showed greater improvement in all 3 constructs.



Graph to show the average decline in rating scores over the duration of the programme

Conclusion: The Control group showed a greater decline than the Experimental group for Relatedness and Mastery constructs, but not for the Reactivity construct where the Experimental group showed a small but greater decline.

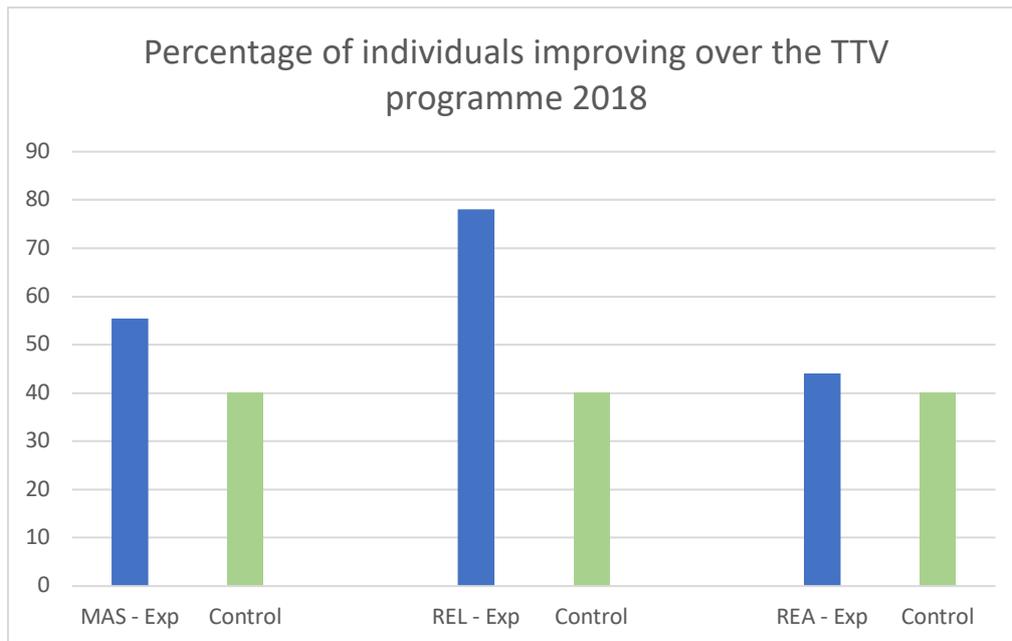


The following graphs use percentages as there were different numbers of individuals in the control and experimental groups who completed the ratings scales all 3 times: at the start, middle and at the end of the programme.

There were 9 in the experimental group and 10 in the control group.

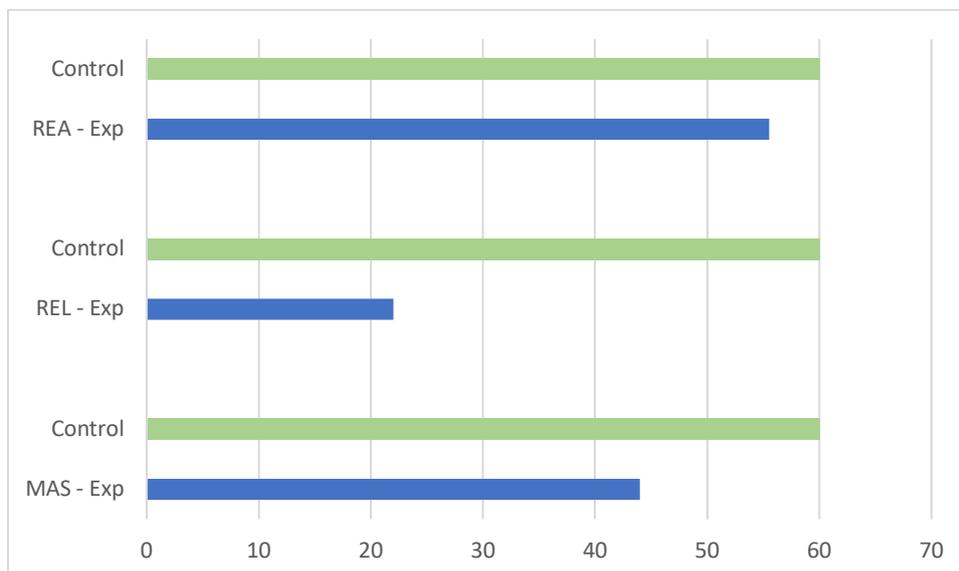
Graph to show the percentage of individuals in each group who showed improvement over the 3 areas from the start to the finish of the programme

Conclusion: A greater percentage of individuals in the experimental group than the control group showed same or improvement across all 3 constructs, although this was a marginal difference with the Reactivity construct.



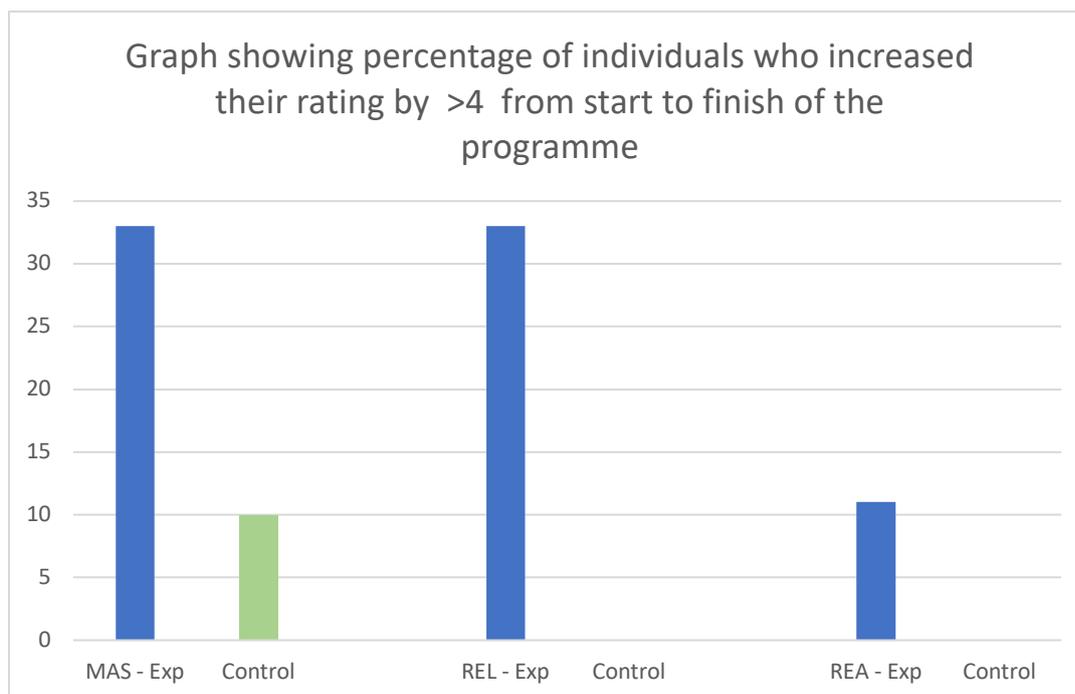
Graph to show the percentage of individuals in the experimental and control groups who showed a decline over the 3 areas from the start to the finish of the programme

Conclusion: There was a greater percentage of individuals from the control group than the experimental group who showed a decline, and this was across all 3 constructs, and particularly so in relation to Relatedness where the control group showed greater decline.



Graph to show the percentage of individuals who increased their ratings by over 4 points over the course of the TTV programme 2018

Conclusion: More individuals gained more than 4-point increase across all 3 constructs in the experimental group, and the control group had no individuals making such progress on the Relatedness and Reactivity constructs.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The evidence collected earlier was designed to answer the following hypothesis:

‘Can we offer an experience to teenagers who may not normally choose a challenging adventure, which would transform their mindsets and thereby support their future success and happiness?’

There is clear evidence of the positive impact which participation in the programme has had on the participants.

Participants improved their confidence, resilience and sense of purpose through taking part in the programme. The challenging nature of the trip to Gunjur and the experience of seeing a different culture and working on a specific project with very different people gave the majority of the young people a real transformational experience.

This evidence will be reviewed and added to over time to help assess not only the longer-term impact of the programme but also to help answer the following question:

‘Exactly what was it that participants experienced that made the difference in their thinking?’

Recommendations

- Clear identification of demands and benefits of the programme and expectations of participants in advance
- Extra group bonding sessions before the trip abroad
- Clear (but flexible) programme for the trip abroad with more leisure activities/opportunities included.
- Update advice about cash required and insect repellent
- Add additional challenges e.g. learn language, music, cooking and teaching in Gunjur schools
- More time in communes with families, if possible.

Section 2

The impact on the Gambian partners and community

Feedback at the end of the two weeks of the TTV programme in Gunjur, August 2018

This information is taken from individual interviews. It was all extremely positive with some helpful tips and ideas to improve the programme in future years.

Ratings given were based on a scale of 1 to 5 – 5 being excellent.

Recruitment process of the programme

1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
0	0	0	1	14

Grade: Excellent. The respondent who gave a 4 said “This could be a 5 if the programme was extended to engage other kabilos (areas of Gunjur) by inviting heads of the kabilos to encourage a response within their kabilos.”

Organisation and clarity of the expectation of the programme. Respondents were very positive, but one said that he did not know the detail of the individual projects until the UK team arrived.

Expectations of the programme:

To translate. / To learn from each other and about cultures. / To work together.

What do you think is the purpose of this programme?

Quotes: ‘For young people to work together’. / ‘To exchange ideas between young people and to understand how young people can do things for themselves’.

What is the value of this programme to the community?

All respondents thought it was excellent initiative. Each of the 3 projects received 100% excellent feedback.

Quotes: ‘To teach and help preserve the history of our community and to learn new skills’. / ‘It has inspired me to talk to my elders about their lives’. / ‘Because it teaches us that we have a lot to gain in our own community from our elders, showing respect and turning the mangoes into resources and employment’. / ‘It has given employment within our community to the youths’. / ‘Learning through TTV’s work in the community to learn about our community so I can take that to another level by asking questions on the radio to share information’.

What has been the experience of working with the UK TTV students?

All of the respondents rated this as excellent

Quotes: 'Because it is improving my English, and the TTV partners are friendly to us, and give respect and we also respect them – we are family like brothers and sisters.' / 'I have really enjoyed it more than I thought! They are special! / 'Improving my English, experiencing new things, making friends.' / 'It's amazing, everyone is amazing.' / 'Amazing – it is very difficult to learn with people you've never met especially when they are young, but it felt good with the TTV group, showing and sharing.'

Four of the respondents said it would be better if the TTV people were hosted by local people as they would learn more and then the local community would know more about TTV.

Overall rating of your experience of this programme. / What have you gained?

90% of the respondents reported that this was excellent.

Quotes: 'My partner inspired me, he's so intelligent, to make the report, he made it fantastic!' / 'Improved my English speaking – it has made me happy interacting with people I have never met and who did not imagine meeting – I am very happy to have a partner from another part of the world'. / 'A lot of experience, visiting different businesses like United Purpose, Tropingo, the High Commission, visiting places, meetings.' / 'Increased confidence to help my community, desire to work for my country'. / 'Discussing and learning things we don't know from our elders'. / 'Understanding the value of everyone working together to improve society'. / 'Learning new things, about English culture and language'. / 'I learned about the dangers of FGM which I didn't know before'. / 'I have learned the stories of the elders and how they are selected to be in their positions e.g. the Nyansimba'. / 'I learned from the older people they showed that even here we can make it though many young people have gone away'. / 'I have gained personally to not think about the back way and going abroad and be more confident about doing things here'. / 'It has given me courage to talk to people, changed my perception about TARUD, and exposure to other community members has given me better thinking instead of negative thinking'. / 'Networking in the community with contacts I can follow up if necessary'

Ideas for future TTV projects:

- To develop the youth skill centre for the self-employed (20%)
- Increase Vegetable gardening
- Skills for processing mangoes e.g. chutney
- Skills for changing tomatoes into tomato paste
- Writing a history of Gunjur
- Sewing
- Plaiting and make up
- Pushing the mango project forward
- Art work: learning how to make bread baskets, craft work

Suggested Improvements to the programme:

- To visit more historical places e.g. James Island, National Museum
- To choose the project that you are interested in before TTV UK group arrive and do some preparation work
- To have Gambians more actively involved in the projects (e.g. preparing something before TTV group arrive)
- It would be better if the TTV people were hosted by local people as they would learn more and then the local community would know more about TTV
- Include other kabilos

Summary

The response from the Gambian community was hugely positive as evidenced by this feedback. It has been a great experience for all the young people and community.

The main intention of the programme was to help UK teenagers, but it has clearly had a huge positive impact on the Gunjur community also, which is very rewarding.

Recommendations

- Include other kabilos
- More time in the communities for teenagers.
- More information ahead of the meet up, possibly link up teens electronically in advance?
- Return to Gunjur?

Section 3

Administration and organisation of the programme.

Feedback and recommendations from Teachers, Gunjur Project leaders and Parents:

Two teachers who led the projects, two parents of the teenagers and the head of the Gunjur Project centre where the TTV group and adults stayed, were interviewed or responded to questionnaires for this section rating their answers from 5 'Excellent', to 4 'Very good', 3 'Satisfactory', 2 'Poor', 1 'Inadequate'.

The responses from the two teachers and parents were aggregated together and expressed as a percentage so one response is equivalent to 25%). Responses from the Gunjur Project leader are shown separately.

Organisation and administration

25% said Excellent. 75% said Very good. Gunjur Project leader scored 'Excellent'

Communication throughout the programme

25% said Excellent. 75% said Very good. Gunjur Project leader scored 'Excellent'

Purpose of programme

75% said Excellent. 25% said Very good. Gunjur Project leader scored 'Excellent'

Clarity of Role

Of the three answers received one each felt this was 'Less clear', 'Very clear', 'Excellent'

The Gunjur Project leader gave TTV students 4.5/5 for behaviour and attitude. It was recommended that pool and bar times need to be given in advance.

How valuable was this programme?

100% thought this was 'Excellent'. The Gunjur Project leader said she would be 100% prepared to host the TTV programme again.

Quotes from the feedback forms

Bit vague and loose at first but became clearer. / Best bits were seeing young people grow in confidence and flourish. / Simply amazing! / It's really all about relationships. / Most moving experience was to see young people connect with the Gambian partners

Quote from the photography teacher. The photography sessions in the field were the most valuable of all. We met with a broad range of people that the volunteers would never had had the chance to talk to and went on an interview/ communication journey to get to the point where the subject relaxed and the volunteers saw how they could take good photos. The other joy was giving the photos back to the subjects and enjoying their reaction. I felt that these outings were the TTV

“moment” where I could share my years of experience, not only of photography, but of parenting, communication and life beyond. These trips inspired invaluable discussions and I felt that I really came to know my volunteers. It also gave me a chance to see what individual support would be required on our travels to Africa. The volunteers have way exceeded all expectations and are delivering extraordinary and inspiring photos.

Sample Issues

Comments by the photography teacher. I hadn't anticipated quite the degree of challenge in getting the volunteers to commit to appointments - partly due to the nature of teenagers and these ones in particular, and the timing of the programme which coincided with exams, but also because the original time requirements expanded as the project grew. This was all part of the learning curve for the delivery team. In terms of photography teaching, I have spent considerably more time doing admin e.g. setting up photo opportunities, costing up exhibitions etc. than I expected, but that was because the project grew, and perhaps I was over-ambitious in terms of how much we could deliver. All this is in the context of the first run of the programme, and the need to generate more publicity etc. As time progresses, I think these challenges will be ironed out.

N.B. When I was having challenges with my volunteers, Caro was extremely supportive and instantly took up the reins in her specialist area. She is amazingly positive, motivated and caring, and makes the project feel safe. I know exactly when and how to call on her for support, and I feel entirely secure as an outside professional working in this team.

The whole of TTV is evolving and all the comments above should be taken in that context.

Comments by storytelling teacher

My experience of the students in this project has been 'engaging and engaged' Prepared to face up to challenges. Their openness to Gunjur and the Gambian partners – simply amazing. How these young people have flourished and found confidence over the year has been wonderful to witness....for me this has been about relationships. ...Seeing the young people make connections with their Gambian partner has been one of the most moving experiences of the year.

Sample parent input:

What improvements could you suggest? In my view, the project successfully achieved the purpose (and much more besides) and it will be interesting to see if this is backed up by the research data. Not only has my daughter found out that she is good at, and really enjoys taking photographs; but she has made amazing friends both here and in The Gambia; and I know that she will remember her trip to West Africa forever – both the challenges it posed as well as the happy memories it created. None of this would have been possible without the energy and enthusiasm of the leadership team – especially Caro.

When volunteers sign up for future projects, we will be clearer at the outset about how much time and work is required.

Conclusions and recommendations

The TTV programme was a huge success and achieved its aims as far as teachers, leaders and parents (that responded) were concerned. The longevity of the transformations will need to be tested over time, so these participants will be revisited later in the year and into 2019.

This was the pilot programme and therefore some uncertainty about activities, purpose and outcomes was expected. As the programme moves forward, the learning from this feedback will be invaluable in firming up the purpose, early preparation activities, having clear information about rules at the Gunjur Project Centre and a clear agenda in the international programme.

Overall conclusions

This programme was devised and created by Caro Strover with the support from Nick Maurice, who provided such outstanding organisation in Gunjur and led the Mango project. The great success of this programme is due to unstinting enthusiasm, determination and inspiring leadership from Caro. This was mentioned by students, teachers, leaders, parents etc.

The outcomes in this programme suggest that young people who may not always choose an adventure in an unusual destination can benefit enormously from taking part in such a challenge. In fact, it turns out that this experience can be mindset-changing and life-changing.

In the context of a society where levels of anxiety, unhappiness and self-doubt are reported regularly in schools and employers report concern over a 'snowflake' generation who lack resilience in the workplace, the TTV programme needs to be expanded and made available to more teenagers nationwide. Indeed, this type of experience should be considered as a curriculum entitlement for all students in schools.

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