

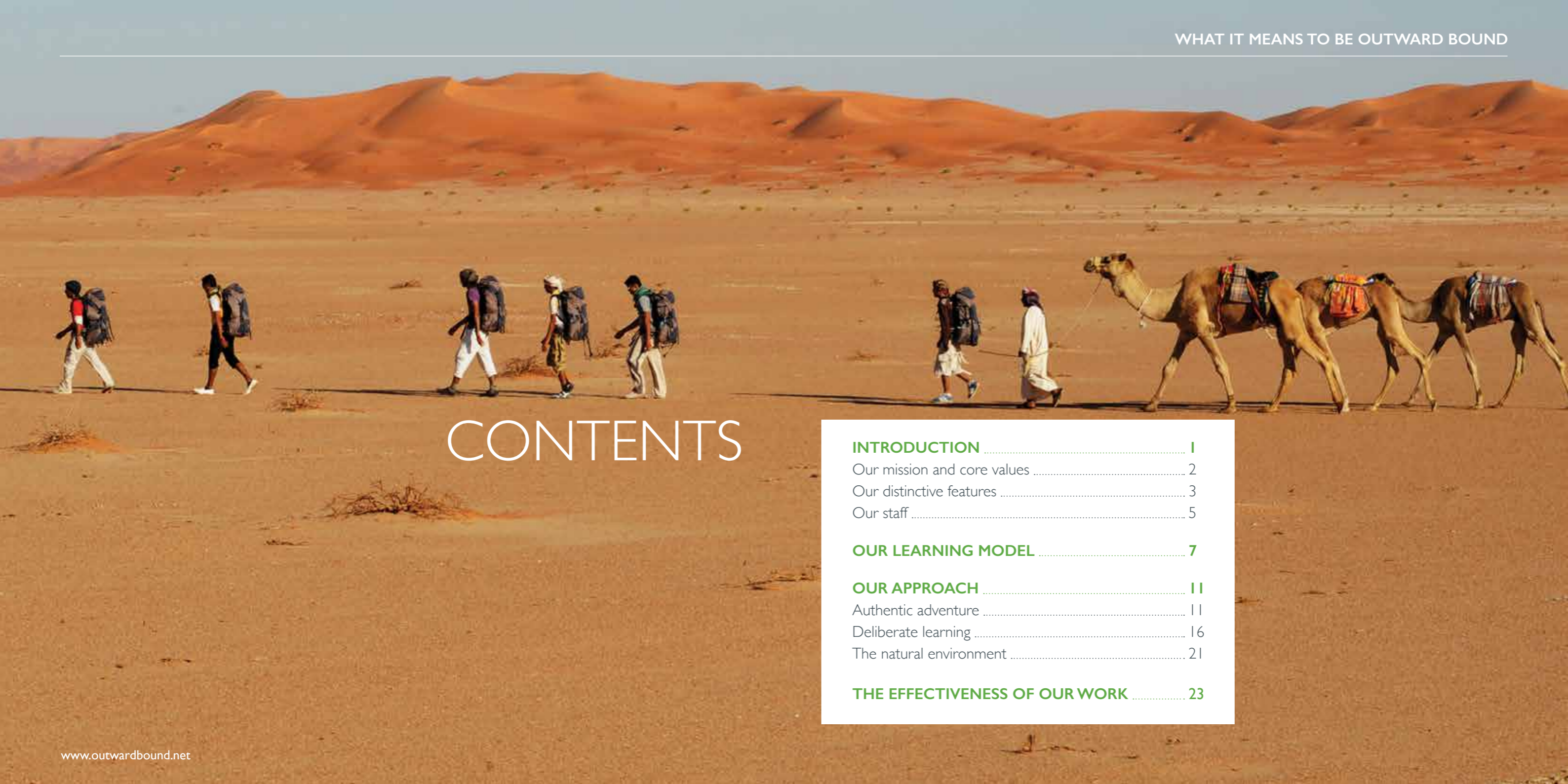


**OUTWARD BOUND**  
INTERNATIONAL

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE OUTWARD BOUND®

OUR LEARNING PROCESS  
EXPLAINED





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# INTRODUCTION

## OUR BELIEF

“ We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything else. ”

Kurt Hahn, co-founder of Outward Bound

## OUR MISSION

We enable our member Schools to be more effective and more resilient and we promote and protect the Outward Bound name and trademark.

## OUR CORE VALUES

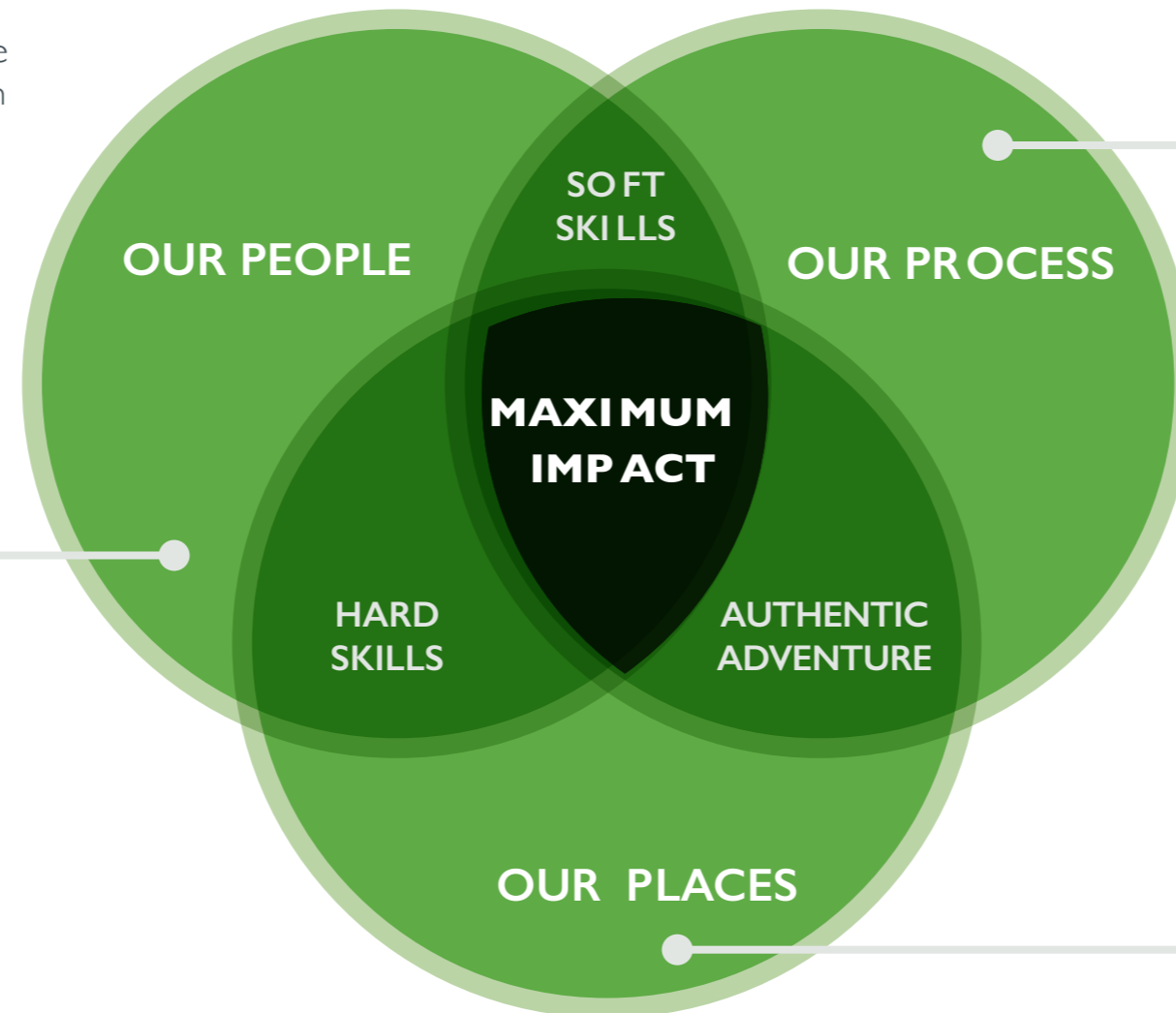
A belief in the power and intensity of learning and adventure in the outdoors – as a means of bringing out the best in our participants.

A deep appreciation of the balance between risk, reward and responsibility. We facilitate authentic learning through purposeful and intense experiences with real consequences and powerful, positive and memorable outcomes.

A spirit of respect and compassion. Our Schools aim to stretch people both physically and mentally. In doing so they act with care, concern and generosity towards people and the natural environment.

# OUTWARD BOUND'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

An Outward Bound program is all about learning and the impact this has on the individual. This is achieved through skillful people working in an inspiring and challenging environment and applying an effective process.



## OUR PEOPLE

- Expert outdoor practitioners
- A pool of creative talent which enables development of solutions focused and innovative programs
- Experienced educators who facilitate learning
- Educators who challenge and impel participants to perform
- Highly qualified and experienced outdoor instructors

## OUR PROCESS

- Experiential learning and development using the outdoors
- Practical application of theoretical models with continuous reviewing and reflection
- Instillation of new behaviours and skills that transfer to the participant's home, school and work environments and that improve performance
- Focus on personal journeys
- Focus on continuous reviewing and reflection

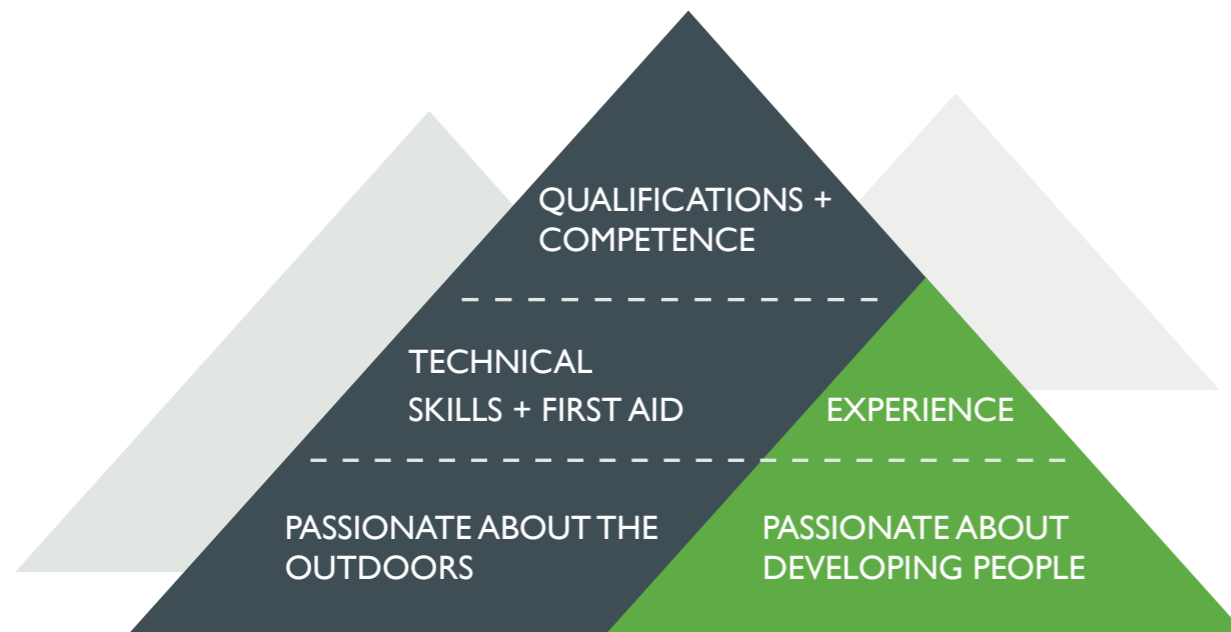
## OUR PLACES

- Real adventures in the natural environment
- Inspiring locations provide limitless opportunities
- Scale of experience and journeys is unique and challenging

# OUTWARD BOUND STAFF

We believe that in order for instructors and trainers to deliver the best possible learning and development for participants they must:

- Be passionate and knowledgeable about the development of people
- Be passionate about, and skilled in, the outdoors
- Be professional, qualified and experienced



## STAFF JOURNEY OF DEVELOPMENT

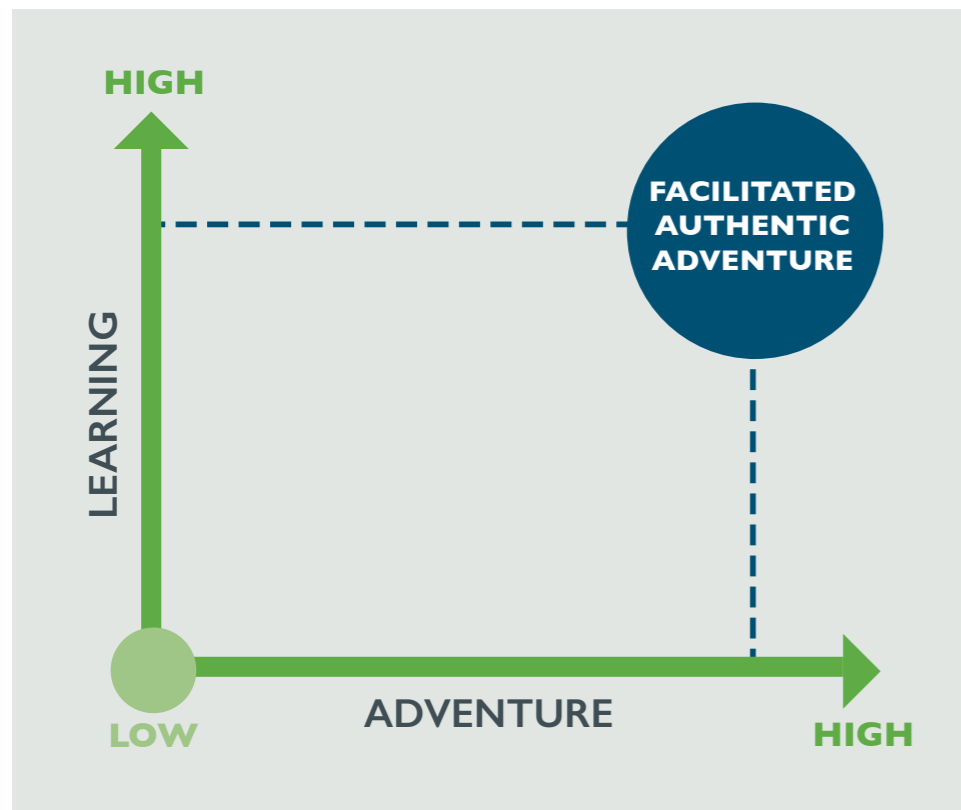


# OUR LEARNING MODEL

## WE AIM FOR PARTICIPANTS TO LEARN:

1. More about themselves
2. How they interact with others
3. About the immediate and wider community and the natural environment.

At the heart of this is learning through authentic adventure. A combination of authentic adventure in the natural environment and the application of a facilitated and deliberate learning process in an outdoor setting. We describe this as being "top right", the illustration below shows this.



Each program will be set in a context for the participants and will have specific learning outcomes. The course will link the learning outcomes, adventure and environment through the Outward Bound experiential learning model.

### FRAME

- Creates a context for learning.
- Links to the participant's own experience of home, school, work and social life.
- Links to previous course experience / learning.

### TRANSFER

- Explanation of how the learning or conclusions can be related to participant's own lives and / or the rest of the course.
- Link back to the framing of the experience.

### FRONT LOAD

- Shares the reasons for doing the activity, setting the agenda, opportunities and expectations with the participants.
- Focuses on the individual as well as the group.
- Possibly supported by a theoretical model.

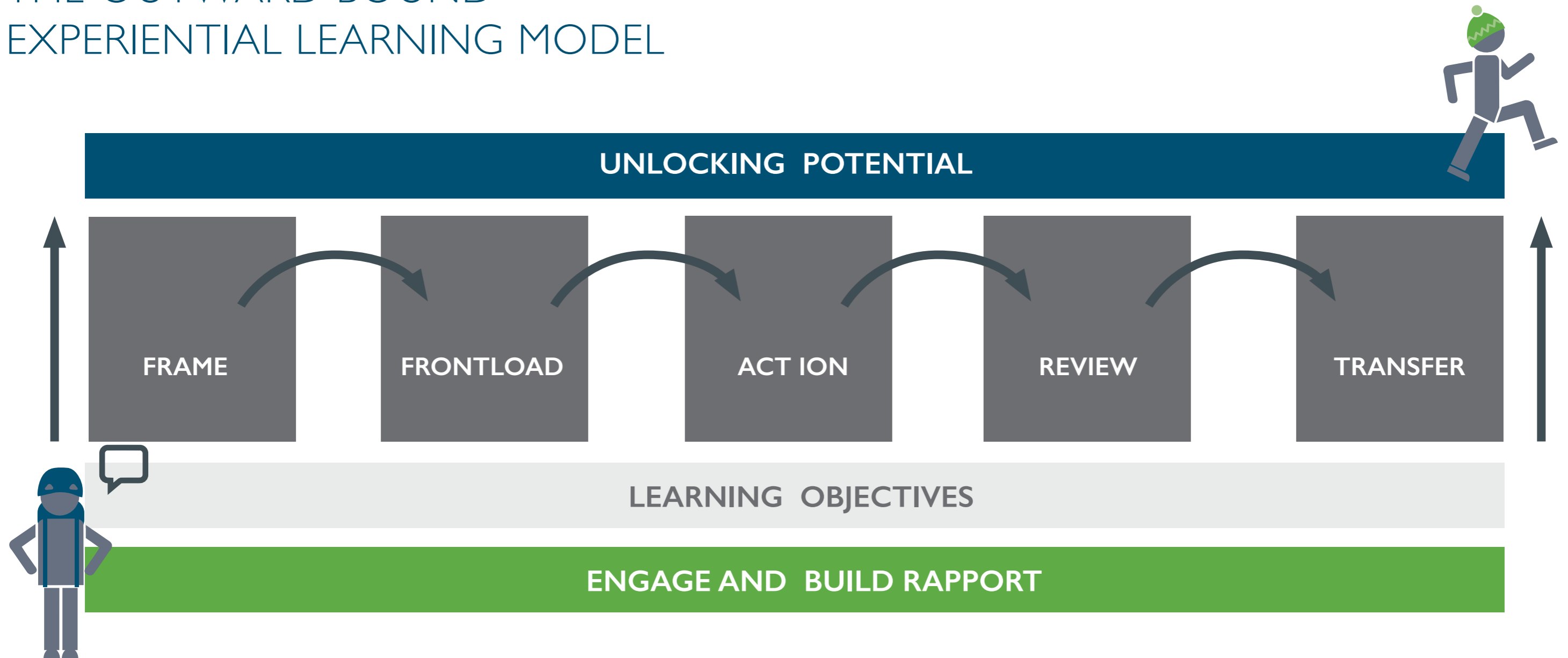
### REVIEW

- Purpose is to reflect and analyse in order to draw out the learning.
- May be mid activity or end of activity, inside or outside.
- Uses open questions to encourage thought and consideration.
- Using active and creative methods.
- Possibly supported by a theoretical model to assist learning and understanding.

### ACTION

- This could be a single task, activity, expedition or the entire course.

# THE OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MODEL



# OUR APPROACH

## AUTHENTIC ADVENTURE

At Outward Bound we use the term “authentic adventure” to describe the activities we offer to our participants.

The following six elements are a way of describing what we mean by authentic adventure within Outward Bound. The whole adventure is often described as a journey, both physical and metaphorical where participants gain new insights and experiences working with others in a close group in the outdoors with a skilled instructor.

The elements are real and as immersed in the natural environment as possible, giving a high degree of uncertainty and challenge. When combined with the deliberate learning process participant's development will be at the highest level. Authentic adventure acts as a metaphor for life; participants can reflect on the skills, attitudes and insights that helped them on their Outward Bound journey and how these will help them in the future.

- 1 EXPEDITIONS
- 2 CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES
- 3 AS SELF-RELIANT AS POSSIBLE
- 4 IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- 5 BEING CHALLENGED AT THE EDGE OF YOUR CAPABILITIES
- 6 PROGRESSIVE

### 1 EXPEDITIONS



**An expedition might be a whole day or a number of days with bivouacs or wild camps. Expeditions involve a journey either on land or on the water.**

The longer time period of an expedition can allow for real consequences and real responsibility. On an expedition opportunities arise to encounter highs and lows; drama as well as tranquility. There will be challenges, along with chances to look back at the journey taken.

### 2 CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES



**A critical element in an Outward Bound experience is engaging with challenging activities in the natural environment.**

These can include gorge scrambling, rock climbing, cutter sailing, descending a river or paddling on the sea or lake and ideally are incorporated into the expedition. By adding these challenging activities, we are more likely to take participants to the edge of their capabilities, creating new experiences from which they can learn.



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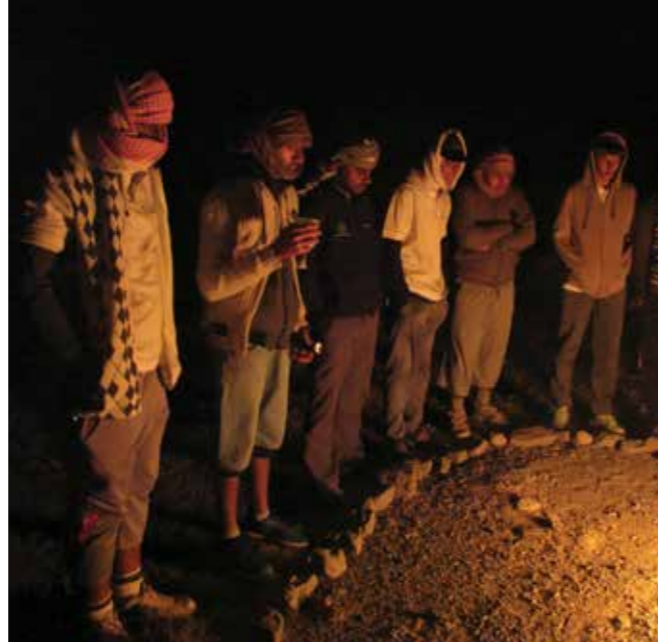
## AS SELF-RELIANT AS POSSIBLE



Self-reliance is about encouraging participants to take responsibility for themselves and each other. They will take responsibility throughout their experience, in activities, life at Outward Bound and participating in reviews. Self-reliance can be related to small tasks, such as tying boot laces and adjusting backpack straps or larger tasks such as the complexity of leading a group through the mountains. Experiencing self-reliance can support a sense of self-efficacy in participants.

4

## IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



In our context, adventuring in the natural environment is about spending time in challenging outdoor places – lakes, rivers, sea and mountains. We aim to provide opportunities for participants to feel immersed in the natural environment, this can involve jumping into a lake, camping on a mountainside, walking through snow, looking down onto a cloud inversion or participating in a solo. We believe by doing this, participants can discover new things about themselves and new perspectives on the world around them.

5

## BEING CHALLENGED AT THE EDGE OF YOUR CAPABILITIES



This is about facing challenges at or near the edge of your capabilities but without exceeding your limits. Everyone has different levels of experience, skill and confidence. Participants have different levels of fitness and different comfort zone thresholds. Outward Bound instructors consider the individual and aim to lead adventures at a level which will be challenging, sometimes very challenging but not overwhelming. When the level is just right participants see themselves in a new light which is engaging, motivating and instructive about who they are and what they are capable of.

6

## PROGRESSIVE



Outward Bound courses are progressive. Taking participants from whichever starting point they are at before the course towards new places relevant for them. At the beginning of a course the instructor will lead and the participants follow; as the program develops the instructor will then always be looking for opportunities to pass the responsibility to participants, where this is appropriate. Outward Bound courses are much more than a combination of stand-alone activities – they progressively open up new experiences, demand new skills and unveil new awareness.

# INCREASING THE LEVEL OF AUTHENTIC ADVENTURE

We sometimes want to discern what will make one program more adventurous than another. All six elements can be delivered flexibly to change the level of authentic adventure appropriate to the group or individual or conditions.

## WE CAN INCREASE THE LEVEL OF ADVENTURE ON A PROGRAM BY:

1. Making it more of a journey and less about stand-alone activities.
2. Helping participants take on a high level of personal responsibility and self-reliance.
3. Deeper immersion into the natural environment and less contact with man-made, urban objects.
4. Supporting participants to achieve more difficult challenges.
5. Making the activities more progressive.

Judging the best level of adventure for each participant at a particular time is at the heart of our instructing. Outward Bound aims for high levels of authentic adventure at all times.

# DELIBERATE LEARNING

These are the six key features that participants will see and experience, and an instructor will deliver. They apply to all Outward Bound programs.

They are written below at the base level. Instructors, through experience and continual professional development, will be working to raise their standards of delivery in each of these core areas.

- 1 PLANNING COURSES AND THE SHARING OF COURSE AIMS AND OUTCOMES
- 2 ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING RAPPORT WITH PARTICIPANTS
- 3 USING APPROPRIATE MODELS
- 4 FOCUS ON 'INDIVIDUAL' AND 'INDIVIDUAL AS PART OF A GROUP'
- 5 REFLECTION / GUIDED QUESTIONS / CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK / FACILITATION
- 6 TRANSFER OF LEARNING AND ACTION PLANS

## 1 PLANNING COURSES AND THE SHARING OF COURSE AIMS AND OUTCOMES

### A CLEAR PLAN FOR THE COURSE WILL EXIST AS A TOOL FOR:

- Giving thought and consideration to how the context, course aims or learning outcomes are to be achieved given the specific circumstances of the course (pre course customer information, resources, time of year, etc).
- Providing a basis for changing plans / activities based upon how the course develops.
- Planning course progression.
- Aiding the daily delivery by having a plan for applying the learning model.
- Informing visiting staff and other Trust staff of progress.
- Evaluating the course.

### THE METHOD OF RECORDING IS LEFT UP TO THE INSTRUCTOR. CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE COURSE IS THAT THE CONTEXT, LEARNING AIMS OR OUTCOMES WILL BE SHARED WITH PARTICIPANTS IN ORDER TO:

- Ensure clarity and understanding of the purpose of the course.
- Assist with measuring success at the end of the course.
- Aid buy-in from the participants.

## 2 ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING RAPPORT WITH PARTICIPANTS

### ENGAGING WITH PARTICIPANTS AND BUILDING RAPPORT IS AN EARLY AND VITAL INGREDIENT NEEDED TO DEVELOP PEOPLE BECAUSE:

- We need to have successful working relationships with people.
- We want to spend time with people we like.
- It is much easier to work with and be influenced by someone who you admire, respect, trust and like. The simplest, most effective test for rapport is "if you lead, they follow."
- It highlights that you value, care for and respect the other person.

Rapport could be described as the instructor being on the same wavelength as the group or particular group members. It is often generated by treating participants as individuals, taking an interest in them, noticing things, remembering things, referring back to things and having the odd joke or sharing a story with them.

Instructors may carefully reveal things about themselves that can help establish rapport and build trust - for example identifying commonalities that they share with participants.

Many instructors will be 'instinctively' good at building rapport with particular types of groups or individuals, but the real skill lies in being able to do this with all groups and participants.

## 3 USING APPROPRIATE MODELS

Appropriate theoretical models will be used to help participants make sense of the experience of their course and recognise potential personal learning.

### WHEN USED WELL THEY:

- Assist with learning.
- Reinforce any points identified in discussion, reflection and group review.
- Assist in making sense or relating the learning points to other situations or experience.
- Assist with progression, reminders, action planning and transfer of learning.

#### 4 FOCUS ON 'INDIVIDUAL' AND 'INDIVIDUAL AS PART OF A GROUP'

Whilst instructors work with small groups, learning at Outward Bound is focused on the individual. Participants start at different places and have different personal experiences. The learning is individual and the aim is for everyone to take something away with them.

Instructors look for challenges to be pitched at an appropriate level for each individual so as to increase engagement.

##### THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT INSTRUCTORS WILL:

- Get to know the individuals in their groups beyond their names within the timescale of the course.
- Have one-to-one discussions with participants (informal) during the course.
- After forming their own first impressions, seek any relevant additional information (beyond medical).
- Be able to describe individuals in their groups in the context of the course to other staff.

##### INSTRUCTORS SHOULD LOOK TO:

- Help create emotional experiences that have impact and will be memorable for each individual.
- Impel individuals as appropriate.
- Identify individual strengths, weaknesses and needs to help individuals achieve their full potential.
- Allocate appropriate levels of responsibility and give praise and constructive feedback to individuals through the course.
- Engage all individuals in the course and build on their strengths.

#### 5 REFLECTION / GUIDED QUESTIONS / CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK / FACILITATION

The aim is to encourage participants to reflect on the adventure and environmental experiences of the course and to consider their feelings and emotions towards self, others and the environment and to link back to the learning objectives. These processes are integral to the course and happen on a continual basis.

##### ENGAGING WITH PARTICIPANTS AND BUILDING RAPPORT IS AN EARLY AND VITAL INGREDIENT NEEDED TO DEVELOP PEOPLE BECAUSE:

##### APPROPRIATE APPROACHES INCLUDE:

- Using guided and open questions to individuals and the group, to assist with engagement.
- Using creative and active methods (art, drama, role play), as these can be an excellent means of reflecting and communicating. They may be more engaging than more formal classroom approaches.
- Using higher order questions that avoid repeating back buzz words.
- Referencing back to previous experience and learning points on the course and to the framing and front loading.
- Seeking to relate key points throughout the course, to the participant's life beyond the course (transfer of learning).

#### 6 TRANSFER OF LEARNING AND ACTION PLANS

Transfer of learning and linking back /forward to the course or session aims is a core part of delivery. This process will be present right from the start of the course and is central to the use of the Outward Bound experiential learning method.

The transfer of learning and personal action planning at the end of courses are important methods of encouraging the ongoing application of the key personal learning of the course to participants' own lives.

The course only has relevance beyond the new experiences undertaken, if applied and built upon, so the values and associated behaviours become habits.

Action plans help in this reinforcement of learning. They are also tangible evidence of good intentions that can be helpful for other stakeholders such as teachers, training or line managers, and parents.

##### IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL LEAVE WITH A TANGIBLE ACTION PLAN, THIS ACTION PLAN SHOULD:

- Reflect the individual's own course experience and learning.
- Link to magic or memorable / emotional moments.
- Relate to course learning aims, objectives or outcomes.
- Link to participants' own reflective record of their experiences.
- Be achievable.

# ENGAGING WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We consciously include strands of environmental learning into our programs. This complements our work to help participants understand more about themselves, how they work with others and fit into their wider environment.

This explicit intent is supported by our approach to achieving our learning through authentic adventure where participants are immersed in the natural environment. Without contact with the environment we are not Outward Bound.

## THIS STRAND OF OUR WORK IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Something special happens to participants when they spend prolonged time in the environment.
- It is our responsibility to facilitate and nurture the special experiences participants have in the environment when they are at Outward Bound.
- Participants are losing the opportunity to experience unstructured play in nature. By enabling this to happen we contribute not only to participant's development, but to the good of the environment in general.



When delivering “the environment” we will take the steps set out in the diagram on the left. This will be done in an inclusive way that threads and weaves its way throughout the course, so that we can; immerse people into our environment, increase their knowledge, challenge their values and behaviours, and transfer those lessons into their lives and their own environment.



# EFFECTIVENESS

## HOW DO WE KNOW THAT OUTWARD BOUND PROGRAMS DELIVER MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES?

Many Outward Bound Schools around the world work with recognised, independent experts to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the Outward Bound programs that they deliver.

Examples of this research, from around the world, clearly demonstrate the benefits of Outward Bound programs:

### CASE STUDY

#### THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST (UK)

Through 2017-18 the UK's Outward Bound Trust used the Resilience Scale\* to measure changes in young people's capacity to adapt positively to challenge and change after completing their Outward Bound course.

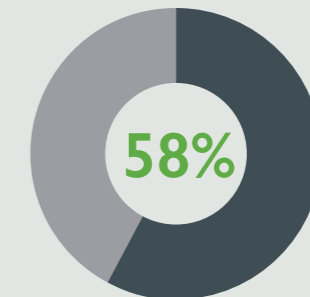
THE SCALE MEASURES FIVE SEPARATE CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENCE:

purpose, perseverance, equanimity (living with acceptance and balance), self-reliance and authenticity (knowing who you are).

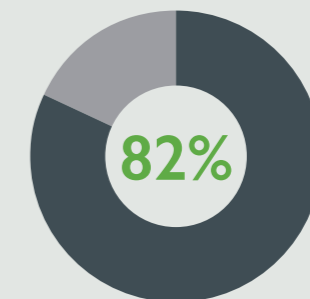
OBT's evaluations show that young people improve their ability to bounce back from setbacks and learn from difficult experiences after taking part in an OB course. At the end of one 5-day Education course, 58% of students increased their score for resilience and six months afterwards 41% recorded an increased score.

At the end of the Skills for Life Award course, 82% scored higher and six months on 64% scored higher. When we surveyed them again twelve months on, we found that the improvements had been retained.

### RESILIENCE



5-DAY EDUCATION COURSE



SKILLS FOR LIFE AWARD COURSE

\*The Resilience Scale is a psychometric questionnaire used to accurately measure resilience. For more information visit [www.resiliencecenter.com/](http://www.resiliencecenter.com/)

Full results can be found in Additional Research, <https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/media/1131004/resilient-young-people.pdf>

## CASE STUDY OUTWARD BOUND CANADA

Outward Bound Canada works with over 3000 young people every year. All participants complete a post course evaluation at the end of their experience that informs program design and delivery and impact reporting.

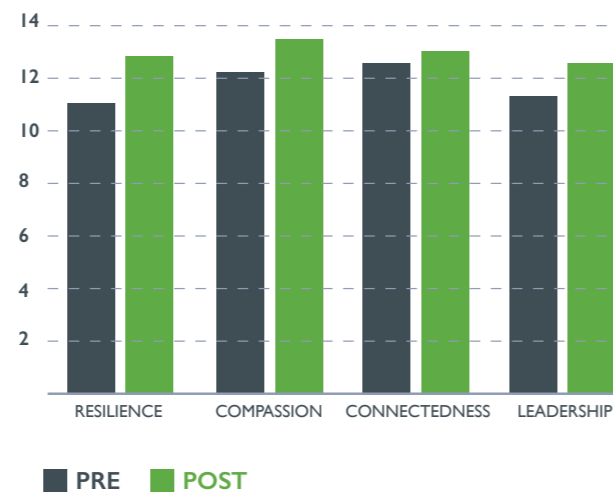
OBC has conducted three impact studies over the last 6 years. Studies showed significant alignment between the primary learning objectives of the programs: improving self-confidence, empowerment, and building resilience and what participants self-reported at course end.

SPECIFICALLY:

- Resilience, or ability to adapt positively to adverse conditions, strengthened. This was measured by an increased level of determination and confidence;
- Increases in Compassion, which encompasses the ability to feel the emotions of another (empathy) but also the motivation to help.
- Connections improved, such as the development of sense of community, attachment to place, and mental restorativeness;
- Development of sense of community, attachment to place, and mental restorativeness;
- Increases in leadership skills such as problem solving, effective communication group collaboration & compassion.

### SURVEY RESULTS OF RETROSPECTIVE PRE-POST OBC COURSE USING 5 POINT LIKERT SCALE

(3 questions per category)



Full details can be found at: <http://e.issuu.com/embed.html#29817746/49640206>

## CASE STUDY OUTWARD BOUND HONG KONG

Since 2015, Outward Bound Hong Kong has used an evaluation system developed in conjunction with Dr. Jim Sibthorp of the University of Utah.

Participants complete pre-course questionnaires specific to the intended course outcomes.

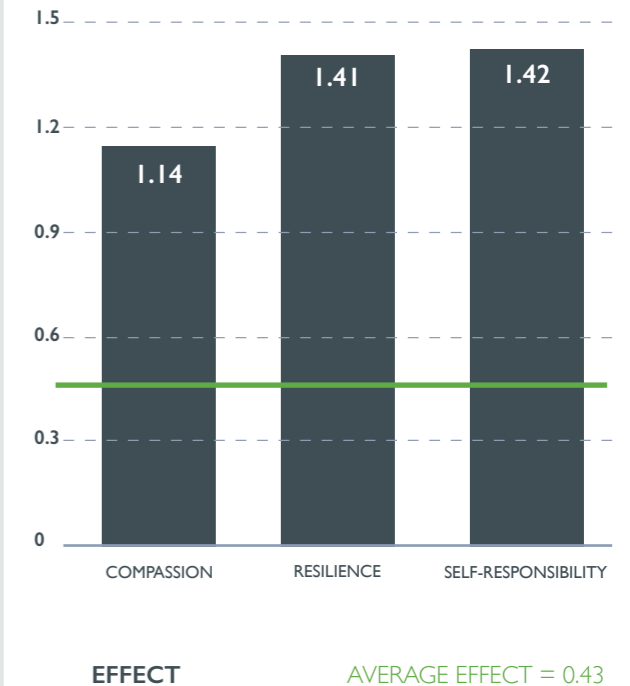
They then complete a post-course questionnaire which allows the system to generate an 'effect size' for the course outcomes. Each course has 3 or 4 specific chosen outcomes selected from: Compassion, Resilience, Self-responsibility, Lateral Thinking, Teamwork, Respect and Self-esteem.

The 'effect size' measurement is widely used in educational research and quantifies the impact of a specific intervention - in this case a course at Outward Bound Hong Kong. In short, it quantifies the improvement in that outcome compared to a participant not taking part in the course.

The effect sizes that OBHK generates through its courses are meaningful. For example, the diagram shows the effect sizes measured on the 'Classic Achievers' course in 2017. The average effect size of 0.43 for generic 'Outdoor/adventure programs' is generated by a meta-analysis of all interventions conducted by John Hattie.

Full details can be found at: [www.outwardbound.org.hk/pdfs/Outward-Bound-Hong-Kong-Impact-Report-2018.pdf](http://www.outwardbound.org.hk/pdfs/Outward-Bound-Hong-Kong-Impact-Report-2018.pdf)

### EFFECT SIZE OF CLASSIC COURSE 2017



## CASE STUDY

### OUTWARD BOUND USA

Throughout its history, Outward Bound USA has been studied, evaluated and analyzed by hundreds of academics and research professionals. Through both regional and national research and evaluation projects we have learned and verified that after their Outward Bound experiences, participants overwhelmingly believe more in their ability to succeed, take responsibility for their actions, and have become leaders in their communities.

In 2017, Outward Bound USA launched the Professional Learning Lab ('the Lab'). The primary work of The Lab is to identify research-based best practices for character development and translate them into professional development for Outward Bound Field Instructors.

Student outcomes are measured across the system to assess the impact of educational practices on the students we serve. Professional learning curricula will be developed so that all Outward Bound Field Instructors acquire best practices quickly and with deep understanding of their significance to the student learning experience.

OUTWARD BOUND USA WILL SOON HAVE ACCESS TO:

- Improved and accessible research to inform field instructor/staff training
- Improved and accessible research to support fundraising and external partner development
- Improved field and administrative staff professional learning and development
- Improved program outcomes across the range of program-delivery environments

**Character education, central to Outward Bound's teaching and learning process since its inception, sets Outward Bound apart in the field of education.**





**OUTWARD BOUND**  
INTERNATIONAL



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