

## **Case Studies and Testimonials**

*These have been collected from a variety of organisations (all members of the Young Explorer's Trust) that organise UK and overseas youth development courses and expeditions.*

### **1. Benefits of the programme?**

There were many benefits to participating in the program and I have learned so much. Leading up to the expedition, the main benefits were learning how to hold fundraising events, organising my time efficiently and working in a group effectively. There were so many benefits to the time that we spent in Bolivia. I experienced a culture and an area of the world that I previously knew little about, I saw some unbelievable places, I met some truly amazing people, I learned some Spanish and I feel that all of the skills such as team-building, organisation, problem solving and responsibility improved.

### **2. Was it a life-changing experience? Why?**

It was most definitely a life-changing experience for me. In some ways, it is difficult to express why! The views at some of the places we visited were breathtaking. They really made me take a step back and say 'Wow!!'

We went to so many amazing places that you could never find anything like here in Britain. Standing on top of La Meseta looking over miles of rainforest was tremendous. I think the part of the expedition that most impacted me was the relationships that we formed and the subsequent lessons I learned from meeting so many different people. We had the most interaction with the local people in the Amazon Basin.

When our bus arrived, we were greeted by lots of children and a parrot called Domingo! They immediately invited us to play basketball with them that evening. People of all ages played and everyone had such a good time. After the game, we spent the evening outside playing with the children. Most of us on the expedition didn't speak enough Spanish to have a conversation with them, but it wasn't an issue. A simple smile and laughter really are a universal language in themselves. Everyone was so kind and generous. Everyone lives in huts and there is no electricity or running water, so some people may say that they are not very wealthy in the materialistic sense that we seem to perceive wealth to be in the Western world. They are, however, some of the richest people that I have ever met in their generosity, their kindness and in their hearts. We were all truly touched by some of the people that we met.

It was a great experience to see how other people live in such a different environment to what we are used to. I think it really opened all of our eyes. I really did learn so many life lessons on this expedition that I may not have learned for many years, simply due to the nature of the expedition. I have been lucky to have done quite a lot of traveling growing up, but none of that traveling has impacted me as much as this expedition, because through the contacts we experienced so many different places

and had interactions with so many different people that we wouldn't have been able to have on a normal holiday.

It has taught me that there is so much in the world that I want to discover and experience. Our British guide, was an inspiration to us because he showed us that if you want to do something or you have a specific dream that it is always within your reach. He's got an amazing job that is filled with adventure. There are some amazing careers out there that are always available to us. I am going to university to be a vet, and I would now like to go to some remote places, like those that we saw in Bolivia, to treat the animals and pass on veterinary skills to the people. The world really is your oyster as they say!

We had a fantastic expedition group and we had a great time together. We immediately bonded well and having a good expedition group is part of what made it so enjoyable I think.

### **3. What skills have you learnt over the last 18 months that you can use in the future and in life?**

While we were in Bolivia, we were in charge of organising all of our transportation and accommodation ourselves, so I think all of our organisational skills improved. We all had responsibilities on the expedition which we had to ensure that we took care of. I think my confidence improved in a number of ways, from trying to use the little Spanish I knew to speaking to the group as a whole. I was in charge of the money, which was sometimes a bit stressful trying to make everything add up, so that was a learning experience as well.

We were sometimes in situations where we had to wait for long periods of time, so our patience definitely improved! We also learned how to make decisions and solve problems effectively within our group, which was very important on such an expedition. I will take all of these skills with me through university and life.

### **Case Study- Polar Challenge 2004**

In December 2004 two students and two members of staff from a College of Further Education in the East Midlands walked to the South Pole. This was the culmination of two years planning, training and fundraising. Two students from the college's outdoor education course and learning support section were selected. They undertook training in Norway and Greenland and raised £150,000 for the full project.

Following an extensive period of risk assessments and meetings with governors the students walked to the pole in November and December. Linked to this was a school road show on their return. The students both took part in talks to schools and colleges. One of the students who went had difficulty reading and writing. He has now secured employment. The outdoor education student who went is now a senior instructor in the industry. The expedition was featured on The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. The fact that staff and students from a UK

educational establishment can organise and carry out a successful expedition to Antarctica proves that anything is possible in the field of youth and school expeditions.

### **Personal Testimonials:**

“Two years ago I was at home in Wales wondering what the big wide world was like. Now at 17 I can say that I have seen children suffering in Africa, seen one of the Seven Wonders of the World and seen various game animals in the wild. In this sense I count myself extremely lucky and would not swap the experience for anything!”

*Student*

“One of our pupils was accepted into University, The Royal Veterinary College London, due to the fact she had done something different, that is she stood out from the crowd due to partaking in an overseas expedition”

*Head Teacher*

The leader managed to take a very diverse group of individuals and turn them into a cohesive and dynamic team. The only frustration is watching the expedition leader getting more out of your students in 3 weeks than you could ever dream of doing in 3 years in the classroom

*Teacher*

Kathryn had the most amazing time in Ecuador. The leader was with them from the start helping and advising on all aspects of the expedition. He worked with care and compassion to bring out the best in them all. Lifetime friendships have been forged through common experience – sixteen individuals returned as a cohesive team. Our quiet daughter left with excitement and some trepidation and came back having laughed and smiles throughout her trip – with lots more confidence and the satisfaction of a challenge met and relished.

*Parent*

It is hard to avoid cliches, but it has given the girls the experience of a lifetime. I am full of admiration for them. In the first instance, for having signed up to such a challenging project and for having completed what was - make no mistake about it - a huge project. They have learnt so much about their strengths and capabilities.

From an educational point of view the project proves that, carefully managed, challenging activities can offer them the chance to develop personally and gain confidence. I am very proud of what they have achieved both as a group and individually, and I hope you are, too.

The philosophy behind the expedition is that young people should be allowed as much control as possible over their own project, with intervention only when safety becomes an issue. Andy the leader was brilliant at carrying this through

and a perfect leader for us. His leadership style of quietly working behind the scenes to encourage and build confidence paid off and the girls had a more worthwhile experience because of it."

*Teacher*

"An apprehensive girl who hoped she hadn't wasted many hours and considerable effort fundraising over the last 15 months kissed us goodbye. A daughter with a beaming smile and brimming with stories met us at Heathrow. She has undoubtedly gained in confidence and self-esteem and thoroughly enjoyed being part of a team but also clearly relished taking responsibility as the leader."

*Parent*

"We felt a few words from us should be added to Mark's reply to your survey. Mark was not the sort of lad that one could imagine leaving the routine life of home, the "school, computer, meeting friends and going to bed" sort of day. We willingly supported him, knowing he is a quietly determined person and deep down he obviously wanted to challenge himself and see if he could cope, even if the idea was a bit scary. He didn't even go with any of his particular close friends.

That he survived tummy bugs, tiredness, "wiggly things in the water" and living on top of other people is fantastic. On the 8<sup>th</sup> we were met at the airport by a poncho/hat/bag wearing son who talked so much we had trouble stopping the flow to persuade him into the car! Very unusual. He carried on in this vein for several hours, recounting the fantastic things he's seen and done, the rafting, the climb, the horse ride, the whale watching, the island....he just went on and on. Over the last two days he has voluntarily read his indecipherable diary to us! Obviously everything wasn't brilliant fun. He knew not to expect that. He realised that it's coping with the waiting, the frustrations, the arguments etc that are also important and integral parts of the whole experience.

*Parent*

By completing this expedition, I now realise how much I have changed as a person. By learning and organising with others I have grown in confidence, I have been given some once in a lifetime memories and an unforgettable experience. I would recommend an expedition to anyone who wants to get to know the real person inside them.

*Student*

My month in Ecuador was one of the best things I've ever done and something I'll never forget. Not only did it show me a whole new culture and country but it helped build me as a person. My main challenge was being leader, but this built up my confidence both as an individual and as a team player. It also helped me to look and deal with problems and people (as a team). Living with the same people for a month can be testing but it teaches you to deal with problems and helps you understand others.

*Student*

## **Raleigh International Corporate Feedback**

"For us, the partnership with Raleigh International is a perfect match. Accenture is all about innovation. And what we need is fuel for our ideas, which is where new graduate talent comes in.

The graduates that apply to Accenture having been on a Raleigh expedition, tend to stand out from the crowd. They often have the skills and personalities that will help them become very successful consultants. They are self-confident, they know the value of team work and the importance of communication. They are not afraid to travel and experience different aspects of life. In short, they are more well-rounded individuals. These are some of the traits that we look for in a graduate recruit."

*Accenture*

" The unique set of experiences Raleigh can offer an individual are highly valued in the Graduate recruitment and selection process at Norwich Union. Taking part in Community projects in remote parts of the world offers accelerated means of developing skills and competencies that are key to the future of our business "

*Norwich Union*

"It's the spirit of adventure we really admire - and covet - in Raleigh graduates. Team working and a pioneering outlook have always been at the core of our success at QinetiQ. So, naturally, they're amongst the first skills we look for when searching for new blood. Over the next year we'll be attracting analytically minded, forward-thinking graduates from most science, engineering, IT and numerate disciplines: people who want to plot their own course of development, not have it mapped out for them. And you can rest assured you'll be bringing your talents to a company with real vision too.

While many companies claim to innovate, how many can count carbon fibre, LCD, flat panel speakers and infra-red sensors among their inventions? But enough of the past. As we always have our eyes set firmly on tomorrow, we'll let our future speak for itself..."

*QinetiQ*

"Raleigh International does excellent work in helping young adults develop their potential. The projects it supports both in the UK and overseas are worthwhile and demanding, but also fun. I believe it is vital that young adults are given the opportunity to understand the world in which they live - to respect the diversity and similarity of people across the world, and develop skills that will enable them to combat prejudice and discrimination. Raleigh International gives people these opportunities, and in doing so helps them develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need to play an active role in our global community."

*Tony Blair, May 2001*