

# RIO<sup>5</sup>

## FERDINAND FOUNDATION Celebration Event

THURSDAY 20 MARCH



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# Impact Report

Full Report for our  
**Inspiring Youth Leaders**  
Programme

 **COMMUNITY  
FUND**

# RIO FOREWORD

Here at the Rio Ferdinand Foundation we know that young people face many different challenges in finding their place in society and achieving their potential in life. We also know that for young people facing economic and social disadvantage, inequality and without a wider network of support, mentors and contacts these challenges are magnified and can have a serious impact on wellbeing, confidence aspiration and achievement.

I believe that with the right support and opportunities young people will achieve their potential in life. Rio Ferdinand Foundation staff, volunteers and partnerships are all dedicated to working to ensure this support network and the right opportunities are in place. We work with young people in their own communities – delivering positive activities, training, mentoring and opportunities for them to harness their skills, put their ideas into practice and to support them into progression pathways in education, training and employment.

The **Inspiring Youth Leaders** programme is a project delivered by the Rio Ferdinand Foundation and supported by The National Lottery Community Fund in Salford, Moss Side and Hulme that has put our commitment into practice between 2017 – 2020.

This report, carried out by external academic researchers, demonstrates impact **Inspiring Youth Leaders** has had on individuals, on groups of young people and indeed on how those young people are viewed and supported by wider society. Within it you will read inspirational stories and feedback on how young people have been empowered to change their own lives, how Foundation staff have provided crucial support frameworks, mentoring and skills for young people to progress and, crucially, how wider society has been engaged to deliver positive outcomes in the community.

This research has further informed the development of the work of the Rio Ferdinand Foundation in Greater Manchester, London and beyond and I would like to thank the staff and volunteers who delivered the programme, partner agencies and businesses who worked with us to offer opportunities and pathways. Especially I would like to thank the young people involved in the programme, whose hard work, dedication and commitment is an inspiration and shows what can be achieved with the right opportunities.

Congratulations to you all





*"The partnership has been essential...We've all used our strengths and came together to provide something young people really need here: opportunity, consistency and local role models."*

# IYL REPORT

Watch the story of Inspiring Youth Leaders  
[Here](#)



## HOW WE INVOLVED PEOPLE FROM OUR COMMUNITY IN THE WORK WE DO

Throughout our 3-year National Lottery Community Fund Inspiring Youth Leaders (IYL) programme RFF have mentored 353 young people (aged 11-25) from Salford, Moss Side and Hulme to lead their own social action projects based within local communities using young people's passions within sports, the creative arts and multimedia.

Our Young Leaders learned how to plan, fundraise, budget and facilitate their own workshops, events, campaigns etc. alongside RFF and their professional mentors, who are local freelancers, practitioners and entrepreneurs from GM. They've built some amazing relationships with RFF staff and their professional mentors:

### YL BECCA QUOTES:

*"I feel like it's made me trust in my ideas ... Like sometimes you bring out an idea and you look at it and you think 'That's not going to do anything' but when [RFF staff] said 'This is good. This is your idea. No one's probably ever done this, this is your point of view, this is how you see it, there's nothing wrong with that'. So, believing in my ideas and trusting in my ideas ..."*

### YL JOE QUOTES:

*"Beena works for the BBC at Media City and has experience and contacts that really opened up new opportunities for me. But I needed help with the basics first, so we looked at my c.v. and website, writing emails...I got more volunteering experience and she understood that education didn't prepare me for work. She did."*

YL's engaged a further 1,260 young people from their communities in fun and free activities during the evenings, weekends and holidays. YL's peers, families and wider community including professionals / teachers have attended these opportunities.

Young Leaders have developed new community-based partnerships with 53 local services and businesses. Engaging them within their social action projects via in-kind donations, staff support, venue hire etc. IYL takes a strengths-based approach and empowers young people to understand the importance of partnership work and utilising local contacts / services to help support not only their professional development but the development of the wider community.

### YL JOHN QUOTES:

*"I dropped out of college and became a young carer, I live in Walkden and there's nothing to do for young people. My passion was dance so RFF helped me to run my first dance workshop, they introduced me to Salford Community Leisure, I carried on volunteering with them and I'm now a qualified dance teacher. There are lots of issues in Walkden and especially the Town Centre so to help with this SCL, RFF, the Youth Service and For Housing came together to run a drop-in youth project every Weds night at Walkden church. We want to get kids off the streets and involved in something fun!"*

Walkden Youth Project involves a partnership between RFF, SCL, IYSS and For Housing. As part of this partnership RFF delivered a free accredited sports coaching qualification over an 8-month period. We supported 8 of the most disengaged and disengaged young people to pass this Level 1 qualification. These young people are now volunteering within local youth centres e.g. The Bridgewater Youth Club, Walkden Youth Project and The Beacon Centre.

Here are some of the YLs and partners accepting their certificates during RFF's Celebration Event in March 2020:

## Our Young Leaders



Amy Hallsworth the Community Development Officer from Salford Community Leisure quotes, *"...the partnership has been essential in providing all of these opportunities for young people. We've all used our strengths and came together to provide something young people really need here: opportunity, consistency and local role models."*

From the success of this partnership Walkden Town Centre have now provided the partnership with a free unused unit within the shopping centre. Young people have called this space 'The Den' and new local partners have come onboard to support Young people with more regular provision such as Maverick Stars Trust. This space will be open in summer 2020 to provide multisport and cultural activities for more Young people and the wider community.

Michelle Attack, Manager from Walkden Town Centre quotes, *"...the partnership has made a noticeable difference to the crime rate inside the centre because Young people have something to do. We want to continue to work with the partnership to do things differently."*

### THE DIFFERENCE WE'VE MADE

YL's programme has made a significant impact on young people's personal, interpersonal and societal development. Key achievements that have been reported by YL's include:

- 95% of young people report improved confidence, self-esteem and motivation via youth-led engagement activities;
- 90% of young people report that being involved in RFF/IYL activities has helped to encourage new friendships and better relationships within their communities;
- 100% of young people believe that the IYL programme has positively impacted their lives and provided diversionary opportunities away from negative influences/involvement in crime;

Following on is a breakdown of the main differences that YL's, staff, families, professionals and partners have fed back during this reporting period:

### DIFFERENCES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S SELF-CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE AND COMMUNICATION.

YL JESS – see film



Jess's professional mentor Olivia, *"I have really enjoyed my time working with Jess and the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. When I first met Jess, she was a wide-eyed little girl with an idea. At the end of the project she was a young woman, full of talent and ideas with drive, ambition and a quiet confidence in her own skills and abilities. For me, it has been an absolute privilege to work alongside Jess on this programme. I think it's also important to mention the work done by Victoria and her team in terms of skills development and confidence building throughout the project. A lot of the time these projects would be nothing without the heart and passion of the people running them and here this really shows. RFF has become a second family for many of the young people involved with this project and has highlighted to me just how important this work is."*

Jess's social worker, Amanda "I have known both Jess & Becca for several years. There were concerns that their family had made the relationship between twins fractious. I have seen the many benefits of the involvement of the Rio Ferdinand project including, improving their mental health in ways that therapy sessions could not. It has given both girls a voice in a world where they had very little control.

For Becca it gave her an opportunity to showcase the importance of looking after our mental health in the ways she thought was helpful for her peers. My colleagues and I that attended learned from this ourselves!

For Jess it provided an opportunity for her to tell her story of her life. Other people have tried to tell her the story, but she was able to own it, being able to so creatively communicate her feelings to her family. In addition the whole production was about how Jess and Becca got through things together, meaning that it also supported the girls reflect on the importance of their relationship".

## DIFFERENCES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS



### YL LUCAS' STORY

Lucas was referred to RFF via the Safeguarding lead at St Ambrose Barlow High School. Lucas is a looked after child and had additional needs and significant behavioural issues that result in him remaining in isolation during school time. RFF supported Lucas over 6 months to plan and deliver his own football project in his local primary school.

Working with Lucas every week presented new challenges, we had to adapt the IYL programme and verbally build up Lucas' idea before he felt comfortable to write down his thoughts. To break the ice every week we brought him hot chocolate and just had informal conversations around his hobbies, passions etc. Over 3 months Lewis slowly began to design 4 football training sessions, RFF staff were in constant contact with the school and his foster carer to check-in with how Lucas was feeling each week. We all continued to give Lucas positive re-enforcement and encouragement, using rewards to keep him motivated.

RFF assigned another Youth Leader, Jordan as Lucas' professional mentor and together they refined Lucas' workshops plans. Jordan is a young person from Salford who has worked with RFF on the IYL programme for over 3 years, we used his passion for football to build a relationship with Lucas and together they agreed delivery plans.

On the first workshop Lucas informed the school that he would not attend the session, he no longer wanted to do his project. RFF, the school and his foster carer encouraged Lucas to come along, RFF advised that his mentor Jordan could lead the first session, as a way to keep Lucas engaged and less panicked.

RFF collected Lucas from school, and he didn't speak, he had his blazer over his head, and he refused to take part. When we arrived at his old primary school his teacher greeted Lucas at the front door and gave him a huge hug and was clearly delighted to see him. This was key in helping Lucas feel more comfortable. In his first workshop Lucas introduced himself to the children and Jordan delivered the workshop with Lucas supporting as an assistant. Over the next 3 weeks Lucas led more and more of the workshops, on the final session his pro mentor Jordan just supported whilst Lucas delivered a tournament.

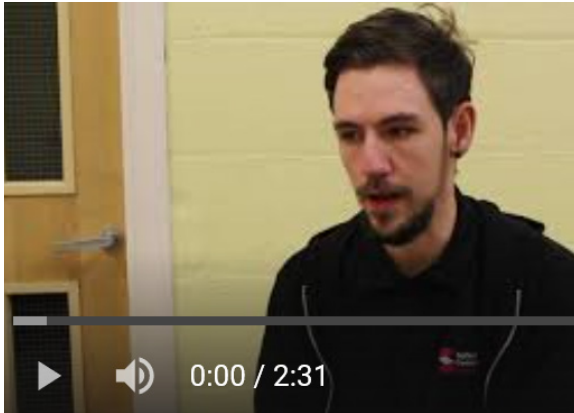
The change in Lucas was significant, he became more self-aware of his feelings and actions. He felt proud of himself for trying something new and this motivated Lucas to stay engaged in positive activities via volunteering with his PE teachers as a football coaching assistant for YRs 7 & 8.

Lucas' foster carer, Susan quotes "Lucas was fortunate enough to be mentored and supported by Victoria & Jordan last September . After conversations with Lucas it was decided that they should create a placement of sorts for him to be able to return to his primary school in the capacity as assistant coach to Jordan delivering football training to year 3&4s (Lucas loves football and young children). Initially Lucas was very reluctant, indeed for his first session he needed a lot of coaxing to even get him to attend and only with the promise of him being able to leave after 15 minutes did he go. Fortunately after this rocky start Lucas gained his self confidence session by session and by week 4 he was happily and confidently coaching with only minimal support from Jordan. The whole experience proved to be really positive and fulfilling, his self esteem improved dramatically and it focused his mind to consider coaching as a serious option for his future, something Lucas up until that point hadn't been prepared to look at. With the responsibility and commitment Lucas showed he recognised a new level of maturity in himself, that he was capable of holding his own in a new and unfamiliar situation and that if he pushed himself he could achieve a really positive result. Victoria & Jordan treated Lucas as a peer which made such a huge difference to Lucas' sense of self worth ,it also helped that Victoria always made sure she had Lucas' favourite chocolate bar and drink! A little gentle inducement always helps I find!

We are very grateful for the input of the Foundation and Victoria & Jordan's personal commitment to Lucas. Since the completion of the project Victoria has kept Lucas in mind with the offer of some complimentary tickets to Man U, this went down very well as he's an avid fan but more importantly for Lucas to be "randomly remembered" (his words) made all the difference."

## DIFFERENCE IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIFE SKILLS, NETWORKS AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### YL JOHN'S STORY



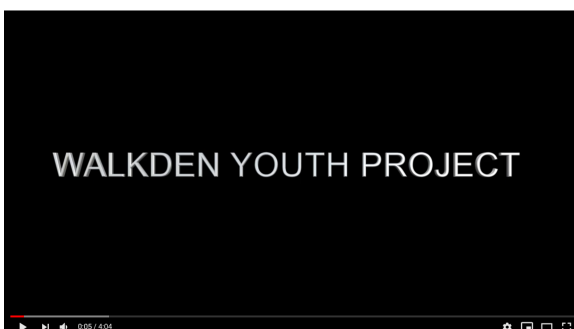
RFF partnered up with National Careers Week (NCW) to deliver a life skills and employability programme to develop young people's work-ready skills and challenge them to trail a mock interview with some of RFF's local partners. The young people involved from Oasis Academy and Eccles Sixth Form College were encouraged to identify their strengths, look into career options and practice job interview techniques! See the NCW/RFF Newsletter on the following page.

Nick, the PE Lead for Eccles Sixth Form College gave RFF and NCW some brilliant feedback from our life-skills programme. Nick quotes, *"The past 4 weeks RFF/NCW have both done a fantastic job with a large cohort of our level one learners on a Sport and Public Services course. The nature of a level one learner can be challenging for a variety of reasons and I think their involvement in the scheme has really given them a real insight into the skills that will be necessary when they leave college. Providing 4 members of staff to host mock interviews for the learners was a great experience both for the students and us as teachers. Adie and I commented on how we were shocked how well some of the learners did but more importantly that they give it everything they had."*

*In the few days after the interviews which were on the Tuesday just gone, it is clear to see the learners are still thinking about it as they appear to be more switched on in class and are discussing getting part time jobs as they enjoyed the interview process and I think it has broken down the fears and barriers they may have once faced in relation to applying for a job.*

*The impact on the learners involved has been a positive one and thanks to you both and The Rio Ferdinand Foundation for setting this up."*

## DIFFERENCE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:





## NCW and RFF – Piloting a new Launch, together!

January 2020 saw a brand new partnership put into practice.

National Careers Week and the Rio Ferdinand Foundation worked together in 2019 to put in place some development sessions for students in two Salford-based centres – Oasis Academy MediaCityUK and Eccles Sixth Form College.

The LAUNCH Yourself programme is designed to support young people in understanding themselves better, assessing their skills and abilities, putting their ambitions ahead of them and learning how best to express themselves – for whatever kind of learning future and career they choose.

We worked with Year 10 girls at Oasis Academy MediaCityUK – chosen because another project was supporting some of the boys in this year – and Year 12 students at Eccles Sixth Form College on the Sport and Public Services Level 1 course.

# LAUNCH YOURSELF

MOTIVATION, INFORMATION, INSPIRATION.

Victoria Lowe from the Rio Ferdinand Foundation (RFF) contacted a number of centres who the foundation works with and asked which ones would like to be part of the Launch Yourself Pilot Scheme and responses from Calum Berry at Oasis Academy at MediaCityUK and Nick Whittaker at Eccles Sixth Form College enabled the scheme to take off.

The four week programme – led by NCW's Enterprise Director Bernie (Andrew Bernard) was a challenging and student-focused set of exercises which encouraged self-reflection and ambition to come to the surface and culminated in interview skills training with some business and employability volunteers through the RFF in Greater Manchester.

After a quiet start, the groups of young people began to open up their thinking and attitudes to the future and by the end were able to fully articulate their plans – as well as hopefully seeing the importance of choosing the correct approach to learning along the way!



Nick Whittaker, teacher of sport and public services at Eccles College said: *"...In the few days after the interviews which were on the Tuesday just gone, it is clear to see the learners are still thinking about it as they appear to be more switched on in class and are discussing getting part time jobs as they enjoyed the interview process and I think it has broken down the fears and barriers they may have once faced in relation to applying for a job".*

*"The nature of a level one learner can be challenging for a variety of reasons and I think their involvement in the scheme set up by RFF and NCW has really given them a real insight in to the skills that will be necessary when they leave college".*

Calum Berry, Careers Teacher at Oasis Academy:MediaCityUK said: *"We found that the programme was incredibly engaging for the students and delivered in a really relatable way by Bernie. I felt it did a tremendous amount for the students' confidence and they were always enthusiastic about the sessions and excited to attend the following week. One thing I felt was particularly good about the programme was the way it built students up to the practice interviews delivered at the end of the course. It speaks volumes that when I spoke to one of the students afterwards about the interviews she said "I didn't want to do it...but then I did it". I would certainly recommend the programme."*

Bernie said: *"We are really pleased with the results for the young people on the Launch Yourself programme...as well as making our resources and events free for participants, it has been fantastic to spearhead our first steps into delivery with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. Supporting young people with their career skills and aspirations is our mission and we really want to be able to support young people in all circumstances and at all stages of their learning and career journey."*

In the future we want to deliver these programmes across the UK and will be looking for sponsorship to make this happen".



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**FERDINAND**  
**FOUNDATION**

# STATS & IMPACTS

Below is a year-on-year breakdown of all the statistics from our IYL programme, the biggest difference in terms of figures would be our engagement stats. Each year our YL's went onto recruit and engage large cohorts of Young people through their social action campaigns, events, performances, workshops, exhibitions and tournaments.

	Target per year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Totals
<b>Engagement</b>	200	604	491	465	1560
<b>Youth Leaders</b>	100	99	110	144	353
<b>Professional Mentoring</b>	100	99	116	124	339
<b>Peer Mentoring</b>	100	100	102	126	328
<b>Accredited Training</b>	80	95	79	82	256
<b>Work Placement / Volunteering</b>	80	174	166	111	451
<b>Partners (Community / Businesses)</b>	10	21	17	15	53
<b>#Achievers – RFF Youth Advisory Board</b>	10	10	12	15	15

## LEARNING

IYL's has been an incredible 3-year programme, as a Foundation this year we've learnt so much about ourselves and the Young people / communities we support. Our core values as an organisation have been redeveloped from this programme and now include youth voice, empower, courageous, connector and caring. Children and young people have helped to refresh our Theory of Change which informs our future programme development ensuring we embed our youth-led leadership approach within all RFF engagement programmes across Greater Manchester.

You can read more about this in our Youth Voices Reflections Report 2018-2019 [here](#).

We've consulted with a number of young people, partners and staff to gather key learning from IYL...

## OVERALL KEY LEARNING;

At least 90% of the young people we mentored on IYL's had emotional health and wellbeing issues that needed to be carefully supported. Developing young people's social action ideas became the best tool we'll continue to use to talk about young people's issues. Doing something positive through social action around difficult / challenging personal issues gave some young people closure, something we didn't expect.

**YL EMMA QUOTES,** *"I've suffered with mental health myself and my family wasn't really open to the idea of mental health and they didn't quite understand how to cope with a family member going through counselling and everything so I thought I want to help other young people who don't have supportive families and / where school don't do anything about it and so I thought I might as well put my own experience into practice and do a project to help other young people going through something similar to me".*



# IYL'S FEEDBACK

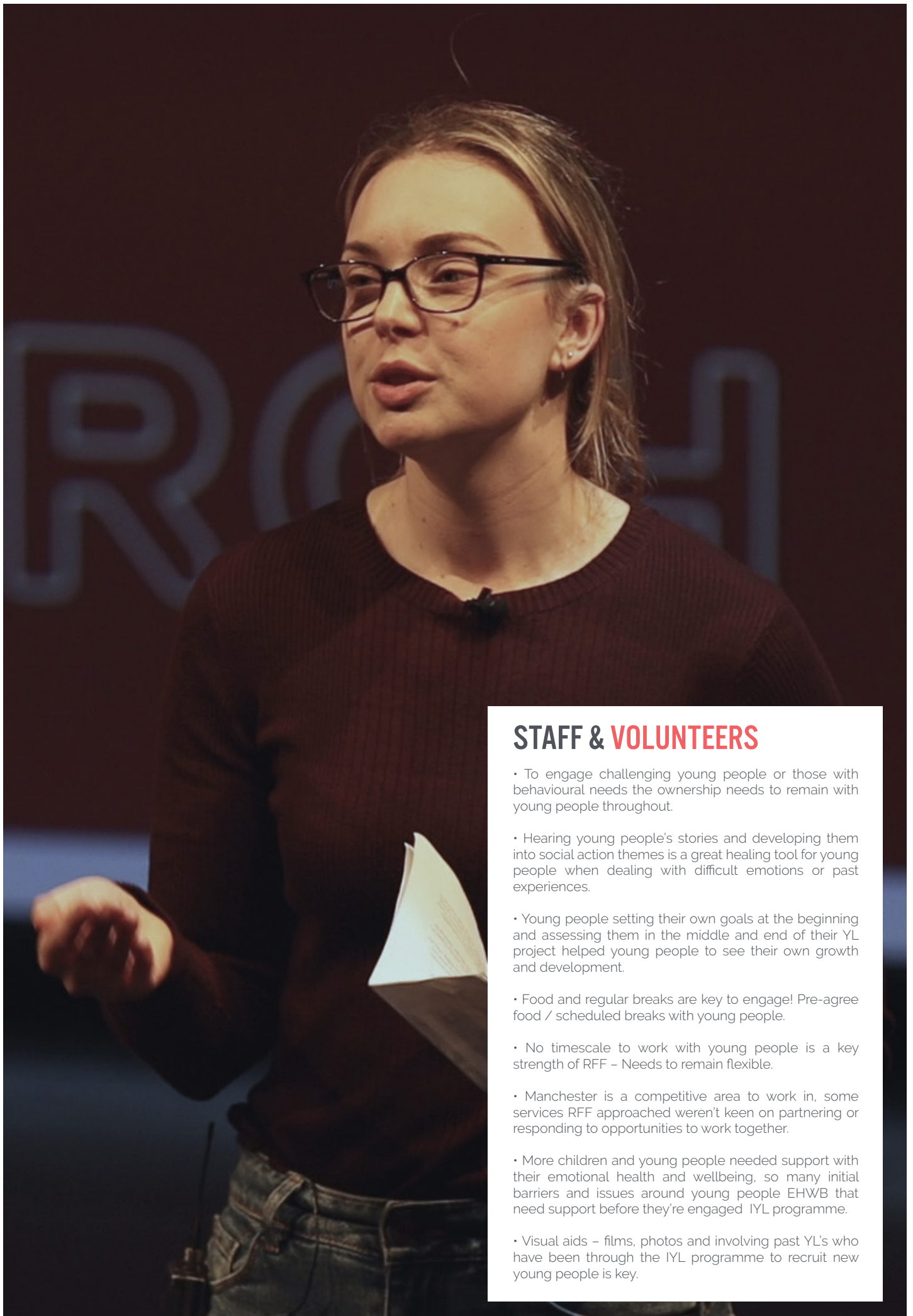


## YOUNG PEOPLE

- Regular 1-2-1 mentoring sessions on a weekly basis with same staff / pro mentors in a space that's convenient to young people is essential in building relationships and supporting young people to try new and sometimes challenging things.
- Young people enjoyed verbally planning their project ideas and drawing out their planning rather than writing.
- Some young people don't want to lead a project, they want to assist and need that choice
- #Achievers meetings need to be monthly and in different locations to suit young people's ability to travel and remain engaged.
- Young people became more aware of the skills they didn't realise they already had through IYLs.
- Young people enjoyed being involved in other RFF opportunities after their YL projects.
- Paid work is important and helps young people to feel valued.
- Free accredited training and then work placement opportunities straight after the training is complete helps young people to keep momentum and has really boosted their c.v.'s

## OUR PARTNERS

- Partnerships with local community-based services and organisations is essential to helping young people feel like they're part of a community.
- Young people need more support with understanding and managing their own emotional health and wellbeing.
- Providing additional support from RFF has been crucial in adding additional value to our own engagement programmes.
- Sharing RFF's further volunteering or work placement opportunities has been key in helping young people progress when our support stops.
- Rio Ferdinand is a great hook for getting sponsorships and disengaged young people involved in something positive.
- Need more funding / sources of income to continue to run regular weekly drop-in projects, when there's limited or no provision business partners see a spike in ASB and crime in their centres/shops.
- RFF staff have provided hope and optimism when supporting partners delivering community projects with both disengaged and inactive Young people. Partners need more lead workers / coaches involved in the delivery of grassroots projects in order to manage difficult behaviour and build trusting relationships with Young people.
- Rio needs to come and meet the YL's!



## STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

- To engage challenging young people or those with behavioural needs the ownership needs to remain with young people throughout.
- Hearing young people's stories and developing them into social action themes is a great healing tool for young people when dealing with difficult emotions or past experiences.
- Young people setting their own goals at the beginning and assessing them in the middle and end of their YL project helped young people to see their own growth and development.
- Food and regular breaks are key to engage! Pre-agree food / scheduled breaks with young people.
- No timescale to work with young people is a key strength of RFF – Needs to remain flexible.
- Manchester is a competitive area to work in, some services RFF approached weren't keen on partnering or responding to opportunities to work together.
- More children and young people needed support with their emotional health and wellbeing, so many initial barriers and issues around young people EHWB that need support before they're engaged IYL programme.
- Visual aids – films, photos and involving past YL's who have been through the IYL programme to recruit new young people is key.

# WHAT'S NEXT

*How we are changing what we do*



From the learning of this programme, our #Achievers (youth advisory board) and recommendations from the external evaluation / impact report, RFF has developed an exciting cross sector partnership programme designed with young people from Salford to support their emotional health and wellbeing at key transitions in their lives.

Worth My Wellbeing (WMW) is a 3-year programme involving formal partners 42nd Street, Odd Arts, Reform Radio, Salford Youth Alliance and Salford City Council. This programme has been co-designed by RFF's YL's, Young people from across all our organisations and the wider community. WMW follows a 4-stage cycle of change: connections, resilience, leadership and ambassadors and aims to empower Young people to recognise and look after their own emotional wellbeing, access appropriate support during key life transitions and cope with adverse life experiences.

Our learning and experience from the IYL programme has been integrated into WMW, during the Connections & Resilience stages Young people will receive essential EHWB support through a variety of opportunities e.g. Wellbeing Manager, Forum Theatre, 42nd Street Peer Ambassadors, Creative workshops using radio/sports etc. Before they progress onto the

'leadership' stage of WMW where Young people will have the opportunity to be mentored in small cohorts or as individuals and plan/lead social action projects or

campaigns for their communities - please see 'WMW Overview 2020' on the following pages for more details.

This partnership will help Salford to thrive through our youth-led social action campaigns, leadership projects, forum theatre style training for professionals and parents/carers. As well as co-commissioning opportunities for local Young people to redesign Salford's mental health directory and shape the future of Young people's mental health services across the city.

We've made significant steps from the IYL's programme to ensure that WMW continues to provide creative platforms and opportunities for Young people to be heard, from both a strategic and local level.

***Thank you to NLCF for funding this programme and to all partners, sponsors and YL's. Special thanks to Hayley Dean for creating the inspiring YL films, Morgan Kenning for the amazing music and Viaduct Video for the photos and films from our Celebration Event.***

# Worth

## Programme Outline

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**Worth My Wellbeing** is a programme for young people from Salford to Salford. Through a programme of activities, young people support each other and provide feedback on community-based Worth My Wellbeing services to shape future service delivery from the earliest point in the men

**Salford** currently has a significant gap in services, a huge gap for those with mental health issues. The number of young people with mental health issues within increasingly complex communities. Adult Mental Health Services are under pressure from various pressures young people face, including emotional health and well-being.

**The Partnership** led by the Salford Community Alliance, Reform Radio and other partners, supports young people whose life experiences are shaped by a variety of reasons. The programme uses creative arts and media to provide mental health support and training for Young Ambassadors.

**Working collaboratively** with a range of stakeholders including the Salford Community Alliance for Change Council (local authority) and feedback from over 170 young people, all of this input we have



# WMW

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CHANGING THE CONVERSATION  
ON OUR WELLBEING  
TOGETHER



COMMUNITY  
FUND

# My Wellbeing

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is an exciting cross sector partnership programme designed with young people to support their emotional health and wellbeing at key transitions in their lives. Through a range of youth-led activities young people will develop skills to support themselves and promote greater awareness around mental health. WMW will build a legacy of young My Wellbeing Ambassadors representing the voice of young people to help raise awareness across Salford and ensure young people can access timely support at the start of their mental health pathway.

There is a 33-week waiting list for young people seeking counselling support leaving a significant need for emotional support. Health professionals are seeing an increase in young people presenting at A&E with self-harm and suicide related issues rooted in complex contributory societal factors. 85% of young people presenting to mental health services are accessing support for the first time. Despite the growing need, we have told us there is limited support available to them to help look after their emotional wellbeing at key times in their lives.

The partnership between Rio Ferdinand Foundation brings together Odd Arts, Salford Youth Centre and 42nd Street. Each brings significant experience of working with young people whose experience has negatively impacted on their emotional health and wellbeing for a long time. This partnership creates a strong and varied suite of interventions using sports, arts and music as conduits to address emotional health and wellbeing. Salford City Council has provided mental health first aid training and co-commissioning opportunities to our WMW

Working with over 45 young people we have consulted a wide range of stakeholders including Salford Mental Health Forum, BAME Mental Health Champions, Fight Back (worked after children), and integrated services teams. We have also taken input from 100 young people transitioning from primary to secondary school and from young people who have developed a flexible programme using a four-stage cycle of change:

## **The Programme:**

Our Worth My Wellbeing Ambassadors will form an expert group for the city of young people. They will work with professionals and practitioners, co-commissioning services, redesigning Salford's City Council's mental health services for young people. They will advocate for young people and help instil confidence in peers in knowing how and where to access timely support.

Our activities are focused on specific age groups and delivered within young people at critical stages when they are most vulnerable to poor wellbeing due to difficult changes, transitions or challenges. Each year there are three cohorts:

- Young people who are transitioning from primary to secondary (age 11)
- Adolescents (YP aged 12 – 15)
- Young people leaving education and facing the world of work (aged 16+)

Over the three-year programme we will support over 600 young people across the city and build a legacy group of up to 120 WMW Ambassadors across the city. There will also be access to online support via digital platforms and social media campaigns developed by young people for young people through their social action projects.

**Our ambition** for Worth My Wellbeing is to develop youth-led communities addressing emotional health and wellbeing. We want to ensure young people understand emotional wellbeing, have a healthy peer support network and are resilient to life with adverse life experiences. Developing young people's skills for life and reading the programme, as a result young people feel more empowered to try new things, access training, employment and enterprise opportunities.

The programme includes a detailed external evaluation co-created with young people to provide valuable learning for the sector. Ultimately, we hope to embed our programme as part of the Thrive model for mental health services being developed across Greater Manchester.



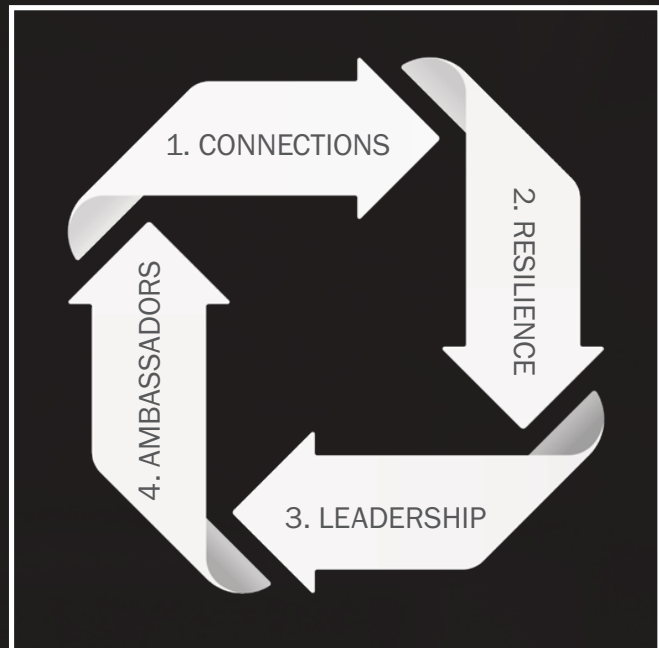
representing the voice  
quality assuring and  
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certain times support  
emotional health and  
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people across Salford's  
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community-based approaches  
people feel connected, can  
be more resilient to cope  
stress for work is built into  
s and move into further

people that will provide  
as best practise within  
Manchester.



1. **Connections** - building relationships
2. **Resilience** – exploring triggers and coping strategies
3. **Leadership** – accredited youth-led social action
4. **Ambassadors** – shaping services through youth voice



REFORM RADIO



# INDEPENDENT IMPACT REPORT

*Produced by Professor Andrew Parker  
Andrew Parker Consulting Ltd*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charting the operationalisation and impact of the programme on young people, partners and stakeholders. Presenting the Headline Achievements, key findings and Conclusions.



## INTRO & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Introducing the IYL Programme. Providing an overview of the Evaluation framework; it's aims and objectives and methods and methodology.



## YOUTH, SPORT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

An overview of the Youth Interventions; Social Inclusion; Social Capital and Mentoring.



## PROJECT FINDINGS

Personal Development: Growth & Change  
Skills & Employment Pathways: The Power of Mentoring  
Interpersonal Connections: Building Relationships & Networks  
'Giving Back': From Mentee to Mentor  
Business Partnerships: Collaboration & Collective Effort



## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Personal & Social Development  
Skills Development & Employability  
Partner / Stakeholder Relations  
Empowering Others  
Recommendations



## REFERENCES

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an independent, external evaluation of the Rio Ferdinand Foundation's Inspiring Youth Leaders programme (IYL). It charts the operationalisation and impact of the programme on the young people and partners/stakeholders with whom it engaged in the Salford, Moss Side and Hulme areas of Greater Manchester, UK. As a three-year funded project, the overall aim of IYL was to have a transformatory impact on its participants in three main ways: (i) individual/personal development; (ii) interpersonal connections and relationships, and (iii) leadership and social action. It aimed to do this by equipping young people with the tools to pursue active citizenship, education, employment/training and/or enterprise. A key programme objective was to develop participants as youth leaders and to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience (via training and mentoring) to lead their own youth and community programmes thereby allowing them to deliver engagement activities and youth work initiatives for (other) 'hard to reach' young people.

Targeted towards marginalised youth aged 11-25 years, the IYL sought to encourage young people to recognise and utilise the skills and qualities that they already possessed by building their self-confidence and resilience through one-to-one mentoring/coaching and leadership development. As part of the programme, young people were required to set their own goals to learn key entrepreneurial skills by designing and implementing a community-based, social action project using arts, media, drama or sports within local community spaces. Participants came from diverse backgrounds and included young carers, those disengaged from education or training (NEET), those in care, and those struggling with their self-esteem and/or with mental health issues. All participants shared a common desire to do something positive for other young people. Participants were offered free non/accredited training to increase their skills-base and to raise their aspirations. With the help of established referral routes and support networks, IYL sought to empower young people to take control of their lives, make informed decisions about next steps (i.e., into further education and/or training, volunteering or employment) and to reach their overall potential.

The IYL programme commenced on 23rd January 2017 and ran until 31st March 2020 and was supported by the National Lottery Community Fund. Comprising a qualitative research design, the external evaluation of the programme was carried out between January-March 2020 and sought to address how and to what extent IYL: (i) improved young peoples' levels of self-esteem and self-confidence (linked to improved behaviours and attitudes) through programme activities, volunteering opportunities, and training and work placements; (ii) developed young peoples' skills for the workplace through accredited and non-accredited vocational training; (iii) increased

young people's ability to build relationships in terms of employment and career opportunities; and (iv) served to change the attitudes of local businesses/employers with regard to young people.

## HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

- The IYL programme supported 353 young people to lead their own social action projects based within local communities using arts, media, drama and sports;
- 95% of programme participants reported improved self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation via youth-led engagement activities;
- 90% of young people reported that being involved in RFF/IYL activities had helped to encourage new friendships and better relationships within their communities;
- 256 young people received free accredited training over the course of the three year programme. Qualifications included: the Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA), Arts Award Level 1, the Football Association (FA) Level 1 coaching badge, and the VRQ in Using Sport to Tackle Youth Crime Among Others;
- 100% of young people believed that the IYL programme had positively impacted their lives and provided diversionary opportunities away from negative influences and/or involvement in crime;
- 451 young people took part in employability workshops, work placements, and further volunteering, training and careers events;
- 95% of young people 'strongly agreed' that mock interview processes (involving programme partners) helped them to develop an increased awareness of their key skills and strengths to go into further training or employment;
- All 53 community partners/stakeholders, including businesses, employers, sponsors and local organisations, worked together with RFF to create new and improved opportunities for young people into further volunteering or training.

## KEY FINDINGS

The key qualitative findings of this report are as follows:

- IYL participants spoke positively about their experiences of the programme and the support which they received in relation to: personal growth/development, leadership experience, and employment/career aspirations;
- Young people reported positive relationships with programme staff and considered the close mentoring support that they received from the IYL team to have been central to their success in achieving their personal goals;
- Programme partners/stakeholders spoke openly about the effectiveness of IYL delivery both in terms of organizational routine and the impact of the programme on diverting local young people away from crime and/or antisocial behavior;
- Young people reported improvements in their levels of self-confidence (particularly in relation to their communication with adults and professionals), self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience as a consequence of programme participation;
- A central feature of IYL for participants was the mentoring/coaching support which they received from industry-based mentors especially with regards to the development of employability skills and the practicalities of building networks (i.e., social capital) and accessing career/employment opportunities (i.e., referrals to industry gatekeepers and related communication skills);
- In relation to its overall aims, the IYL programme was successful in developing a heightened sense of active citizenship amongst participants particularly in relation to their desire to support, lead and empower other marginalised young people as advocates, role models and mentors;
- For a number of participants, a key aspect of the programme was access to relevant training courses, work placements and volunteering opportunities/initiatives which allowed them to feel more empowered and better equipped to embark upon their chosen careers;
- By providing young people with opportunities to design and implement their own social action projects, the IYL programme served to enhance the practical and organisational skills of participants whilst also promoting a sense of social inclusion and community cohesion (via 'shared experience') in relation to those upon whom their projects focused;
- Partner organisations reported positive and successful experiences of working with the IYL programme and the wider Rio Ferdinand Foundation staff team, speaking highly of the service that they received (i.e., professionalism and dedication). Partners clearly articulated the added value that the programme brought to their own organisations and the sense of hope and optimism that it carried in terms of the localities and communities in which it operated;
- Project partners/stakeholders, participants and staff articulated an unequivocal desire to see the programme continue and/or expand in order to reach more young people in need of support.

## CONCLUSIONS

This report concludes that the IYL programme was successful in achieving its stated aims and that it made a valuable contribution to the personal and social development of the young people with whom it engaged. In particular, the programme facilitated: (i) improvements in the self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy of participants through programme activities (i.e., through the design and implementation of social action projects), volunteering opportunities and training/work placements; (ii) enhanced skills development and employability for young people through accredited and non-accredited vocational training; (iii) an increase in participants' ability to build relationships in terms of employment and career opportunities (i.e., via mentoring/coaching support); and (iv) a change in the attitudes of local businesses/employers regarding local young people. What this report also demonstrates is that IYL had a positive impact upon the perceptions of partners/stakeholders in terms its ability to engage marginalised youth and to directly address issues concerning crime and anti-social behaviour. To this end, the report provides evidence of the success of the Rio Ferdinand Foundation in relation to the delivery of the IYL programme not only as a conduit for the personal and social development of young people but also as a facilitator of education, training and employment opportunities.



*"I would have never got to that stage without the Rio Ferdinand Foundation ... [because of their encouragement]...the way that they communicate with the young people has a big effect on us ..."*

# INTRODUCTION & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## INTRODUCTION

The Rio Ferdinand Foundation (RFF) works with young people and communities in the UK and overseas to positively impact society with the aim of tackling anti-social behaviour, academic under-achievement and unemployment, and by promoting community cohesion and citizenship. In so doing, it offers positive activities to engage disadvantaged young people and communities (especially those most 'at risk' of entering the youth justice system) and support for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access training, education and employment and to develop life and social skills.

In recent years RFF has developed a robust and effective four-stage methodology which can be adapted to suit different geographical locations and demographic needs. This comprises: (i) detached youth work and outreach; (ii) personal and social development mentoring; (iii) training and skills building, and (iv) pathways to achievement. All RFF programmes involve a network of strategic partners who support young people to broaden their horizons (both personal and occupational), raise their aspirations, and open up new pathways to achievement. Partner representatives work alongside RFF as professional mentors, supporting and signposting relevant education and employment opportunities and/or collaborating on multi-stakeholder projects and community events. RFF programmes are delivered free of charge at the heart of local communities with the aim of building trusting relationships with the hardest-to-reach young people.

## INSPIRING YOUTH LEADERS

This report presents the findings of an independent, external evaluation of the Foundation's Inspiring Youth Leaders programme (IYL). It charts the operationalisation and impact of the programme on the young people and partners/stakeholders with whom it engaged in the Salford, Moss Side and Hulme areas of Greater Manchester, UK. Targeted towards marginalised youth aged 11-25 years, IYL sought to encourage young people to recognise and utilise the skills and qualities that they already possessed by building their self-confidence and resilience through one-to-one mentoring/coaching, and leadership development. As part of the programme, young people were required to set their own goals to learn key entrepreneurial skills by designing and implementing a community-based, social action project using arts, media, drama or sports within local community spaces. Participants came from diverse backgrounds and included young carers, those disengaged from education or training (NEET), those in care, and those struggling with their self-esteem and/or with mental health issues. All participants shared a common desire to do something positive for other

young people. Whilst developing their projects, participants came together to talk openly about issues that they had faced or were currently facing, sharing experiences and forming positive connections and relationships to help create a greater sense of belonging and friendship. Participants were offered free non/accredited training to increase their skills-base and raise their aspirations. With the help of established referral routes and support networks, IYL sought to empower young people to take control of their lives, make informed decisions about next steps (i.e., into further education and/or training, volunteering or employment) and to reach their overall potential.

During the lifecycle of the IYL programme, RFF staff worked with over 1,560 young people in a range of geographical locales including Ordsall, Langworthy, Little Hulton/Walkden, Broughton, Eccles, Weaste/Seedley, Swinton, Hulme and Moss Side, all of which register within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England (IMD, 2015) evidencing complex issues such as organised crime, anti-social behaviour and high levels of NEET young people. Operating across statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations, IYL established working relationships with 53 referral contacts and project partners/stakeholders. Internal monitoring statistics suggest that the programme achieved a considerable degree of success in engaging the hardest-to-reach groups and that young people perceived a significant increase in self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience as a consequence of their engagement with its various activities which, in turn, served to reduce negative cycles of behaviour, enhance positive life choices, and increase employability.

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The findings of this report highlight the extent to which exposure to the IYL programme positively impacted the young people concerned by enhancing their individual sense of self (i.e., self-confidence, self-esteem, leadership skills), their interpersonal connections (i.e., relationships and networks), and their community influence (i.e., civic contribution). The report also highlights how engagement with such interventions may serve as a powerful tool via which issues of social inclusion can be addressed (see Morgan and Parker, 2017) and through which an enhanced sense of citizenship may be nurtured amongst excluded groups (Theeboom et al., 2010; Parker et al. 2019).

## THE EVALUATION: AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The IYL programme commenced on 23rd January 2017 and ran until 31st March 2020 and was supported by the National Lottery Community Fund. Utilising a youth-based methodological approach, the external evaluation focused on the impact of the programme on the young people and partners/stakeholders with whom it engaged and was carried out between January-March 2020. In line with the wider work of RFF, the evaluation sought to address how and to what extent IYL: (i) improved young peoples' levels of self-esteem and self-confidence (linked to improved behaviours and attitudes) through the programme activities, volunteering opportunities, and training and work placements; (ii) developed young peoples' skills for the workplace through accredited and non-accredited vocational training; (iii) increased young people's ability to build relationships in terms of employment and career opportunities; and (iv) served to change the attitudes of local businesses/employers with regard to young people.

Building upon previous research and evaluation work undertaken by the Rio Ferdinand Foundation (see Parker and Marturano, 2016), the overall aim of the IYL programme was to have a transformatory impact on its beneficiaries in three main ways: (i) individual/personal development; (ii) interpersonal connections and relationships, and (iii) leadership and social action. It aimed to do this by equipping young people with the tools to pursue active citizenship, education, employment/training and/or enterprise. A key programme objective was to develop participants as youth leaders and to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience (via training and mentoring) to lead their own youth and community programmes thereby allowing them to deliver engagement activities and youth work initiatives for (other) 'hard to reach' young people. These experiences were designed to help participants position themselves independently for future employment opportunities once their engagement with the programme was complete. With these issues at its core, the IYL sits comfortably amidst broader contemporary debates surrounding 'at risk' young people (see Bateman, 2017; Home Affairs Committee, 2019) and social and political agendas concerning criminal justice, social inclusion and youth and community development (see British Youth Council, 2019; Children's Commissioner for England, 2018; HM Government, 2018).

## METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

A youth-based methodological approach and qualitative research model was utilised in order to investigate the overall impact of the IYL programme. The evaluation featured data collection via semi-structured, one-to-one interviews with participants (young people), one-to-one/small group interviews with stakeholder/partner organisations, and documentary analysis of existing statistical data (local, regional and national) and published reports concerning similar initiatives. Interviews were carried out in person and lasted between 30-45 minutes and explored participant and stakeholder perceptions and experiences of IYL. A total of five one-to-one, semi structured interviews were conducted with project participants. In addition, one one-to-one, semi-structured and one small-group interview (n=2) was conducted with project partners. Contextual observations and informal discussions also took place with the project lead. All interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim.

Qualitative data was analysed using a grounded theory approach whereby respondent interpretations of their experiences of the programme were explored in detail as were the meanings which they attached to these experiences (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998;

Bryman, 2016). The questioning style during interview was open-ended and, where necessary, further probing took place in order to clarify responses (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2011; Robson and McCartan, 2016). Grounded theory methodology allows for the systematic analysis of data through a process of open, axial and selective coding and the formation of a conceptual narrative that explains the experiences of participants from their own perspectives (Charmaz, 2014). Data were coded, managed and organised manually and were subsequently analyzed in four stages (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2008). First, transcripts were read in full to gain an overview of the data. Second, each transcript was individually coded and indexed allowing the different aspects of respondent experience to be captured. Third, these experiences were then clustered and inductively rationalized into a number of over-arching topics. The final stage of analysis involved the formal organization of these topics into generic themes in line with which the qualitative data are presented. The empirical findings of the evaluation are located and contextualized against an analysis of existing research into youth interventions and it is to a brief overview of this literature that we initially turn.



# YOUTH, SPORT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

## YOUTH INTERVENTIONS

Delinquency and anti-social behaviour (ASB) amongst young people has long been regarded as a problem in UK society (see Bateman et al. 2013; Bateman, 2017). In response, regional and national strategies have adopted a range of approaches including the structuring of youth interventions around mentoring, education, employment/training, and resettlement packages (see McNeil et al., 2012; HM Government, 2018; Nacro, 2020).

Since the 1960s UK government policy has consistently promoted sport and physical activity as a tool for tackling youth crime and a well-rehearsed argument in the academic literature is that sport, leisure and arts-based activities may present some kind of remedy for anti-social behaviour and re/offending. Nichols (2007), for example, argues that sport has the potential to reduce youth crime in three ways: (i) as a distraction or as a surveillance mechanism, (ii) as cognitive behavioural therapy; and (iii) as a 'hook' or relationship strategy. Indeed, there is a plethora of evidence documenting the benefits of sport and physical activity for young people in line with these assertions (Ekeland et al., 2005; Busseri, 2010; Quarmby, 2014; O'Donnell et al., 2019; Morgan et al., 2019).

However, some have noted that claims surrounding the transformative potential of sport may be exaggerated (see Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011; Coalter, 2015; Woods et al., 2017). In this sense, it is generally acknowledged that the provision of such activities is not enough to prevent the occurrence of social problems but that they can be used, both within custodial and community settings, to generate positive change in marginalised young people thereby alleviating criminal and/or anti-social behaviour (Meek, 2012; Meek et al., 2012; Parker, Meek and Lewis, 2014). In turn, they can work effectively if intervention occurs before these behaviours take root (Farrington and Welsh, 2007), and/or when provided alongside wider support mechanisms (Muncie, 2009). Collectively, such research findings highlight the extent to which both the personal and social aspects of sport may positively impact marginalised young people by promoting attributes such as self-confidence, self-esteem and a range of interpersonal skills whilst at the same time having the capacity to nurture an enhanced sense of citizenship (see Muncie, 2009; Morgan and Parker, 2017; Parker et al., 2019). To this end, many youth interventions include sport, physical activity and arts-based activities as a tool for engagement often combining these with broader programmes of employment, education and training (see, for example, Parker et al., 2018).

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

It is fair to say that the marginalisation and social exclusion of young people continues to be a major challenge at the global level (see Pique, Veá and Strecker, 2016) and that issues concerning un-/employment dominate related debates. This has consequences for young people who are categorised as not in education, employment or training (NEET). In their analysis of such debates, Morgan and Parker (2017) utilise the work of Strathdee (2013) to explain how attempts to resolve the crisis of NEET young people have traditionally incorporated three types of approach: (i) 'motivational' strategies (which attempt to encourage the identified population to re/enter the workforce, primarily through skill development); (ii) 'punishing' strategies (which aim to force young people into paid employment by reducing welfare dependency or by increasing the negative connotations attached to being NEET), or (iii) 'bridging' strategies (which aim to generate social connections that may enable marginalised young people to increase their social capital in relation to employment networks and opportunities).

Morgan and Parker (2017) argue that being classified as NEET can bring with it a sense of stigma relating to being anti-aspirational, irresponsible and/or negligent in terms of one's social/civic duties (see also Yates and Payne, 2006; Winlow and Hall, 2013). Highlighting some of the broader difficulties that disadvantaged young people may face, Morgan and Parker (2017) suggest that rather than focusing on academic achievement and paid employment as the basis for personal 'worth', strategies to re/engage marginalised youth should look to more informal structures of recognition such as verbal expressions of praise, trust and acceptance (see also Levitas, 2005; Whittaker, 2010). Morgan and Parker (2017) go on to argue that at an interpersonal level, acceptance and recognition from individuals within socially valued institutions (e.g. corporate or charitable organisations), has the potential to enhance self-worth through the acknowledgement of strengths and qualities which fall outside of more conventional spheres of recognition (i.e., school, college, academic achievement) whilst also facilitating a sense of 'belonging' in relation to more traditional life-course pathways (i.e., education, employment and training). Showcasing qualitative findings from two small-scale, UK-based sporting interventions, Morgan and Parker (2017) demonstrate how positive interpersonal relationships may enhance both the sporting and wider personal experiences of NEET young people especially via mentor/mentee interactions. In particular, they demonstrate how an emphasis on the establishment of trusting relationships by coaches and/or project leaders may have a significant impact on young people in relation to feelings of recognition, acceptance and belonging and which may, in turn, enhance social inclusion.



## SOCIAL CAPITAL

Of course, such forms of recognition, acceptance and trust also have the potential to impact one's social capital, i.e., the value which social networks can bring in relation to social mobility (see Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988). One of the best-known discussions on this topic is that of Putnam (2000) who suggests that there are three distinct types of social capital: 'bridging', 'linking', and 'bonding' – and these provide a useful framework via which to analyse the social mobility of marginalised youth (Morgan et al., 2020).

In sum, 'bridging' social capital refers to the social connections that are constructed across and between horizontal social divisions, (i.e., membership of a specific, communal activity – such as sport – may provide a context within which such horizontal ties are created). 'Linking' social capital provides greater opportunities to enact social mobility by promoting vertical connections between diverse social divisions, (i.e., the potential of a activity to attract participants from different social class backgrounds allows the possibility of marginalised young people gaining greater access and opportunity within mainstream social settings). 'Bonding' social capital relates to a sharpening of relationships within a particular social group as a consequence of the exclusion of others, thus controlling the quantity and quality of the social ties that promote social capital (see Putnam, 2000). Given their wide appeal, Morgan et al. (2020) suggest that interventions concerning sport and the performing arts offer significant opportunities to participants for the accumulation of social capital due to their ability to bring people together. Meek et al. (2012) for example, found that combining sport with educational provision was a successful way of engaging marginalised youth in education and/or training activity leading to increased employability and enhanced social networks. Similarly, Hughes (2005) found that arts-based interventions may be used to engage those 'at risk' and help them into education, employment and training whilst at the same time facilitating the development of transferable skills such as communication and teamwork (see also Lonie, 2011). In turn, Morgan et al. (2020) conclude that sport and performing arts interventions offer a platform to enhance social capital as a consequence of their potential to promote community cohesion (see also Kelly 2017; Parker et al. 2018).

## MENTORING

A further component of youth interventions – and one which is certainly common to sport-based programmes – is that of mentoring. As we have seen, recent research has highlighted the importance of mentoring in relation to the establishment of trusting relationships within the context of coach/mentee interactions. Morgan and Parker (2017) argue that critical to successful mentoring within this context is the generation of positive (trusting) interpersonal relationships with project staff and that when successful, these relationships have the potential to enhance the sporting and wider personal experiences of the young people concerned. The underlying philosophy behind these interactions differs significantly from traditional forms of mentoring where the mentor is often someone who is relatively unfamiliar with (and disconnected from) the personal and social circumstances of the mentee (see Coalter, 2013, 2015). In this alternative model, interactional engagement is based on an altogether more tangible peer-mentoring scenario where 'shared experience' provides the bedrock upon which trusting relationships can develop and where regularity, frequency and consistency (of provision) are paramount (see also Parker et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2018).

Of course, recognition of the impact of high-quality models of mentoring amongst marginalised and vulnerable

populations is nothing new (see Liao and Sanchez, 2019; Lund et al., 2019). Pryce (2012) for example has argued that in order to build meaningful relationships with young people in school settings, mentors must demonstrate a genuine desire to learn about their mentees (i.e., 'what makes them tick') and respond in an authentic and empathetic way (see also Spencer, 2012; Spencer et al., 2018). Others have emphasised the specific benefits of 'informal' (naturally occurring) mentoring where young people experience an element of control and autonomy over the choice of mentor (as opposed to more structured processes where mentors are 'formally' assigned). Important too are mentoring approaches that provide encouragement, support and role modeling (emotional and practical) in non-hierarchical ways (see Meltzer et al. 2018). For example, Schwartz et al's (2016) pilot study of the Connected Scholars Programme (CSP) in the US found that when young people were encouraged to build relationships with a range of adults around the enhancement of their academic and career goals (i.e., college tutors, programme staff, and mentors) without the need to create formal mentoring relationships, this increased the value that students placed upon social capital whilst at the same time enhancing their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy (see also Shier et al. 2018). The quality of mentoring provision (i.e., the closeness of the relationship between mentor and mentee) is especially critical where specific vulnerabilities are evident. For those in care or leaving care, for instance, authenticity, consistency of provision and longitudinal investment on the part of the mentor can serve to mitigate wider experiences of rejection and disappointment and aid not only the physical and mental health needs of the mentee but also emotional and cognitive development including social capital (see Spencer, 2010; Aherns et al., 2008, 2011).

It is against this contextual backdrop that the Rio Ferdinand Foundation's Inspiring Youth Leaders programme sought to facilitate the re/engagement of marginalised and disadvantaged young people in relation to their individual/personal development, interpersonal relationships, and leadership potential and it is to a more in-depth exploration of the programme that we now turn.





*"I feel like it's made me trust in my ideas ... when [RFF staff] said 'This is good. This is your idea. No one's probably ever done this, this is your point of view, this is how you see it, there's nothing wrong with that'. So, believing in my ideas and trusting in my ideas ..."*

# PROJECT FINDINGS

This section explores participant and partner/ stakeholder experiences of the IYL programme. These experiences fall into five categories which we consider in turn: (i) Personal development, (ii) Skills and employment pathways, (iii) Interpersonal connections, (iv) 'Giving back', and (v) Business partnerships.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: GROWTH AND CHANGE

Programme participants all talked about the way in which their work with IYL had assisted them in terms of personal development, growth and change especially around issues such as: resilience, communication and self-confidence. Communication and self-confidence in relation to mental health were key issues for Emma:

*"I feel like I'm now better at communicating with adults. 'Cos, like, communicating with my own age is easier because we speak the same 'language'. But, like, speaking with professionals and being able to put across what I'm thinking as a young person and for a professional to understand that, I feel like that's grown. 'Cos sometimes with professionals because they're in their [social care/mental health] industry and they know what they're talking about - because they've worked in it for 30, 40, however many years - they [think that] they understand everything, but in reality they don't. They just see the outside of what people present. So, for professionals to understand what's going on inside a teenager, and for someone who suffers with mental health, it's a lot different from how someone presents themselves on the outside. So, being able to communicate that in a respectable manner (and not degrading someone for not knowing), but putting my point across, I feel like I've learnt how to do that."*

Hannah, Nabila and Emma had all gleaned a significant sense of leadership development through their experiences of IYL and through their wider connections with RFF. For all three, their social action projects had been their first experiences of leading others. They had also gained a significant amount of confidence from the fact that: (i) they had been given permission by the RFF staff team to think creatively about their interests and passions and had had these ideas validated; (ii) they had been given the opportunity to then turn these ideas into social action projects; and (iii) they had been given the opportunity to articulate, lead and co-produce these projects with other young people/peers, adults and professionals. When asked about her experiences of creating a social action project – a dramatization of her autobiographical experiences as a young person in care – Hannah articulated how this had been an empowering process:

*"I told [RFF staff] what I wanted to do and then I wrote the story – like my whole life story ... and then we brought in a Spoken Word Artist where they create stories that portray what you're trying to tell ... I wanted to be in control of it all because it's my life, so I wanted it to portray my life how I wanted to tell other people about it. I wanted it to be real and I wanted the people in the audience to feel the emotions I felt in my life."*

Emma reflected similarly on her own social action project

which comprised a mental health workshop the aim of which was to combat some of the stigmas surrounding mental health and to provide strategies for young people to be able to talk to others. The workshop had been turned into a short film and online resource and Emma had found it especially useful and enlightening to learn about all of the different aspects of organising and managing such a project:

*"It started off as a mind-map and then we broke the mind-map down into specific areas like, financing ... people to invite, how we would run it, what would be included, what resources we would need ... Then over the weeks ... [we looked] at each topic [area] and delved into it more. Like how much funding we were getting and how we would split that into different areas, what mental health professionals we could get involved [and] which young people ... what timetable would work best for the professionals and young people ... from high schools and college and that everyone would be happy to be on film. And then I wrote a monologue about the event and why I'd done it and how it came about ..."*

One of the things that was especially important for Emma within all of this was the empowerment of children in care and, in particular, the provision of support for them in developing authentic lines of communication with social workers and health professionals:

*"I think because I've ... been with social services for [so many] years ... they don't connect with young people in the sense that they can read their emotions ... Being in care I've seen other care children and they can say things that they're not entirely feeling. Like, they'll say things to impress a social worker to make it seem like everything's fine because you don't want to put more stress on them ... so for us we just put on a little front. That's how it is."*

## SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS: THE POWER OF MENTORING

Without exception, young people talked openly about the positive role that RFF staff had played in their lives as part of the IYL programme in relation to skills development. The mentoring process, in particular, had been significant in this respect. For example, Nabila and Kyle discussed the power of having Connie – a local media professional – as a mentor in terms of personal skills development:

*Kyle: "Yeah, so there were eight [mentoring] sessions, and we did six one-hour sessions and then one two-hour session at the end just to round it off ... It was me and a lady call Connie. She was fantastic. I couldn't fault her. She's a Producer for lots of television and radio and stuff and she's done all sorts of media ... and she's got links in the industry ... She showed me [that] if she was going to hire somebody to do what I wanted to do, what she would be looking for on my CV, what she would be looking for on my website ... and then telling me like this is what you've got to do, you've got to e-mail these people ... and these are the kinds of opportunities that are likely to come up."*

*Nabila: "I wanted to start a YouTube channel and so they got me in this amazing mentor called Connie. She works at the BBC ... someone who had a lot of background*

experience in the creative industries which was really good because you don't want someone helping you out with no knowledge ... or experience and she was amazing. At the end of 2017 ... she said 'Nabila you should do the 'Speak-Up Challenge' that basically prepares you for Ted Talks and conferences and things like that ... and IYL actually funded me for the course ... With the help of Connie I can [also] edit on different software so those skills have developed ...'

Progressing IYL participants into further opportunities either after their engagement with RFF programme delivery or through direct referrals, allowed young people to develop new pathways into education, employment and/or training. Having engaged various health professionals in the creation and presentation of her own mental health project, Emma, for example, went on to connect with a number of other (locally-based) mental health organisations in relation to her work. In turn, established working relationships with referral partners and project stakeholders enabled RFF staff to signpost other young people to appropriate employment opportunities:

Nabila: *'Recently I was on a UK tour, theatre show, acting and ... I would have never got to that stage without the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. I don't think they'd believe it that they were part of my success in that period of time but they were ... [because of their encouragement] I started going to a drama club and then - I don't know how - but I ended up being in a theatre show with an entertainment company ... They don't realise it but the way that they [RFF staff] communicate with the young people has a big effect on us [IYL participants] ...'*

In a similar vein, Emma reflected on the way in which being closely mentored by the RFF staff team (and being given 'permission') to approach things creatively had impacted her ability to think positively longer-term:

*'I feel like it's made me trust in my ideas ... Like sometimes you bring out an idea and you look at it and you think 'That's not going to do anything' but when [RFF staff] said 'This is good. This is your idea. No one's probably ever done this, this is your point of view, this is how you see it, there's nothing wrong with that.' So, believing in my ideas and trusting in my ideas ...'*

For Nabila too, being mentored by members of the RFF staff team had proved invaluable in terms of the way in which this had allowed her to recognise and negotiate the complexities of project design and implementation:

*'I learnt a lot over the three years. Like how to set up my own business. I've always been good at communicating with young people but they have taught me a lot of tricks and skills and they've enhanced a lot of my features. A lot of stuff that I used to do, now I do them much better because of the Rio Ferdinand Foundation. Like public speaking. It's not all about just getting up and just talking and talking it's more about planning it ... there's a lot that I've learnt from them ... For example, when I wanted to do one of my projects but didn't get the funding for it ... I thought it was just an event that you put on and you invite people and you e-mail the influencers but no ... there was paperwork and risk assessment and funding applications ... And planning and organisation ... Every single project that I plan ... they sit with me and help me plan it.'*

## INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

As we have seen in the case of both Nabila and Kyle, having mentors had the potential not only to develop individual skills-sets and attributes, but also to open up work-related conversations and opportunities. In turn, participants also recognised how their involvement with IYL had facilitated an expansion of their interpersonal connections and

networks via relationship building (i.e., social capital). Lucas talked about this in relation to his own experience:

*'It has benefitted me to be in partnership with them [RFF/IYL] because it's opened doors for me. I feel that it's opened up avenues that I can go down whereas sometimes I might feel stuck if I didn't have their support ... and I know that if I need help or if I need to get a job or to do a few more qualifications or whatever I can always turn to them to see if they've got anything for me or if they've got anything that I can take part in.'*

In turn, involvement in IYL had led to a volunteer role for Lucas with a local health and wellbeing and (RFF partner) organisation called Fit Start:

*'I volunteered when there was nothing going on. Fit Start provide a team of sports therapists at [public sporting] events like the Salford 10K ... and they'll station people ... if people want like a pre-event massage ... so they put me on a sports massage course so I did the course so that I was able to be one of the sports therapists giving out massages when there was an event on ...'*

The CEO of Fit Start, Abbas, provided insight into the ways in which he perceived this partnership with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation to have been beneficial to both parties:

*'We had a meeting to discuss what we could do [together] and what we could offer and that led to us being introduced to Lucas and we were looking for someone to come and work with us on our training days. Lucas was interested in going to university and he wanted to do some other qualifications and so we paid for two of his qualifications ... the Basic Massage course followed by the Level 3 Sports Therapy qualification and that's how it started.'*

For Abbas it was clear that the partnership between RFF and Fit Start had proved beneficial not simply at an organisational level but also at a personal level for Lucas:

*'I think Lucas, since working with us, has developed a more professional personality ... that was very important for us to grow him in that area ... Because we work in the medical as well as the physio' side of things and we have to have personal contact with members of the public and there's confidentiality and a level of professionalism that needs to be offered in terms of information and treatment and diagnosis in relation to the kinds of injury that they may have ... learning to describe what he's going to do in terms of relieving them from their injury but also learning to listen to what the individual experiences. He's grown in that area and we're quite proud of him in that capacity.'*

Both Lucas and Kyle had completed their undergraduate studies whilst being engaged with RFF and had witnessed the value of IYL provision through a range of signposting and referral processes. One of the things that stood out for Kyle was the way in which IYL mentoring had provided knowledge and practical help that degree level study could not:

*'The mentoring side of things ... was the one thing that was missing at uni. We did have [industry] professionals as lecturers ... but they didn't really give you too much of an insight into like, this is what's going on in the job market ... It's partly down to the fact that I really wanted to go into audio production ... I don't know that we had that many people [lecturing staff] that had done too much with that at the uni' at the time ... and so it [IYL mentoring provision] was a connection to the real world. It was basically like here's all these places you can go and look for work ... this is what you need to do, ask them if you can do [work] shadowing ... and little secrets about networks and stuff. And it's like 'Oh wow, they [university] never told us this'*

For Nabila, there had been a direct relationship



*"It has benefitted me to be in partnership with them [RFF/ IYL] because it's opened doors for me. I feel that it's opened up avenues that I can go down whereas sometimes I might feel stuck if I didn't have their support"*

between mentoring and relationship building especially in terms of networking skills:

*"For example, career-wise ... now I know that networking is important, so what I do is that when I go to events and workshops like I used to do I make sure that I speak to the people who are managing it and present myself about my contact info ... For example, with Connie, she taught me what to put into an e-mail so that you can attract people ... There was one workshop ... where I really wanted to do a collaboration with the organisation, so Connie was like 'Nabila, I think you should actually go because: (i) you might enjoy it, (ii) it's a great opportunity because you want to network with these people, you want to collaborate with them, why should they accept you if they haven't seen you in person? When you go, speak to them, approach them'. That's the sort of thing that I've learnt."*

### 'GIVING BACK': FROM MENTEE TO MENTOR

As we have seen, all participants involved in the IYL programme shared a common desire to do something positive for other young people; in their words they wanted to 'give something back'. To this end, Nabila, Hannah and Emma had used their social action projects to provide workshops for young people in local schools which aimed to raise awareness around a series of key issues. A central facet of these workshops was that of 'shared experience' around difficult lifestyle circumstance. IYL participants wanted to use their own experiences of adversity to mentor others and to 'protect' them from going through what they had been through - or at least help them negotiate such circumstances via suitable coping strategies, as Hannah and Emma explained in relation to their own projects:

Hannah: *"We did the peer mentoring workshops and ... the first one I did I got my mentor to do most of it but like the last one I did everything ... I finished my project in June [2018] which was about my life and then IYL asked us back again to do a peer mentoring workshop which helps Year 7 transition from primary to secondary school and teaching them about three life skills that we wish we knew (sic) in Year 7; communication, confidence and resilience ... It's just teaching them what communication, confidence and resilience is about and how they can apply it to everyday life.*  
Emma: *I've suffered with mental health myself and my family wasn't really open to the idea of mental health and they didn't quite understand how to cope with a family member going through counselling and everything so I thought I want to help other young people who don't have supportive families and [where] school don't do anything about it and so I thought I might as well put my own experience into practice."*

What is clear here is that one of the outcomes of these social action projects was that they not only provided IYL participants with the opportunity to become advocates on certain issues, but also role models and mentors for others by virtue of the fact that they had intentionally turned personal adversity into social action. In the case of Emma, this was achieved not only by the presentation of her workshop but also via the production of the resulting film:

*"We filmed it on the day. So, my whole idea was a workshop ... but for people who we didn't invite or for people who are struggling, I wanted to put it on a film and then put it online so people could access it so they don't have to go to a counsellor but they can look for [coping] strategies online ... So, I sat down with an editor and I picked the best bits from the day that I thought would help people the most ... and then we put it all together and then we put helplines at the end in case people need that extra support but don't know where to turn to."*

What then of the impact of Emma's social action

project on her target audience? As we have seen, one of the key drivers for her in undertaking the project was to turn her own negative experiences into something helpful for others and this ambition became a reality after the presentation of her workshop:

*"One of the boys who went to the workshop he added me on social media afterwards and he messaged me and he said 'Thank you for putting that on cos' that has really helped me'. And that's what I wanted. As long as there's like one person then that's all that matters ... I think he goes through struggles with his mental health so even if that has ... stopped him from self-harming or ... helped him mentally and for him to know it's online and he can go back to that at any time in his life then ..."*

Evident in the case of Emma is that taking part in the IYL programme had been much more than simply participating in a youth intervention. For her, this was about being a spokesperson for those in need and about creating spaces of hope for those whose circumstances she had experienced and overcome:

*"I'd like to see myself as someone that people look up to not in the fact of being a celebrity or something, but that they can turn to for help and for connections and for mental health workers ... because I've now gone on to work with other mental health organisations ... so in that sort of sense where I can be a role model in mental health for people to turn to and say 'She was a really good help'; turn to their friends and say this is the advice she gave me and then pass that on because that may impact more lives."*

### BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS: COLLABORATION AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT

Another central strand of IYL was partnership-building with local businesses. Speaking as project partners and stakeholders, Tracey (a Local Authority employee) and Deborah (a corporate facilities manager) talked about the way in which RFF had worked in partnership with their organisations to run a range of projects in the Walkden area, one which took place in a local church and one which was situated in a vacant unit in the town's main shopping centre (which Deborah managed). At the outset, these projects had proved difficult to negotiate simply because of the sense of risk that had surrounded the prospect of intentionally bringing disadvantaged young people into these settings. However, both had gone well and this had increased confidence levels within the local community and amongst partner organisations:

Tracey: *"The young people who attend the sessions [at the church] on a Wednesday evening are hard to reach young people so we haven't got mass numbers, probably 10 or 15 per session. But some of those kids have shop-lifted here [Walkden Shopping Centre], they are terrorizing Security Guards on their bikes, they are causing issues ... RFF came in to run the Inspiring Young Leaders award ... and we had 15 who originally signed up to it and we had 8 that went through it - but to get those 8 was amazing. And it's not just kids that were causing issues, we've got a couple of females who were totally inactive ... so we worked with those girls to say that it's more about the 'leadership' so we're not bothered if you can kick a ball or catch a ball ... and it's those achievements [that matter] rather than having 20 kids who don't do anything wrong and who you could get through quite easily ..."*

Deborah: *"Having activity like what RFF put on ... really does help to channel the problems that might happen in the Centre or elsewhere. It helps those [young] people that potentially could cause those problems; it gives them something to*

*do. It stops boredom ... I welcome anything that occupies youngsters because there's nothing for them to do but equally I'm aware that they are hard nuts to crack ..."*

Whilst all parties involved accepted that it was unlikely that any one project would resolve the ASB problems in the area, where once there had been feelings of fear and suspicion around the engagement of marginalised young people, partnership with RFF had brought with it a clear sense of hope and optimism:

*Deborah: "For me ... I'd like RFF to put activities on here every day, if there was funding, because I think there's a noticeable difference when there is something going on ... When there is nothing happening then that's when we see a spike of problems again ... It gives us activity and if we can work with a business partner that has funding then that can potentially save us some budget but equally we can give them a venue free of charge to use to implement their projects and utilise their funding wisely ... [The empty units are] void space and it's an opportunity to bring the space alive ... and also to combat the ASB. Yes, there is an element of risk when you do anything with youths ... but at the same time I'm all about looking at change and trying to turn things on their head and do things differently and being brave and trying to combat the issues rather than ignore them because ... they're not going to go away."*

A key aspect of business partnerships - and part of the reason for this renewed sense of hope and optimism - was that programmes could work in tandem to create a sense of continuity for young people around pathways of progression. Here Tracey recounts the journey of one RFF participant who had graduated to work for her own organisation:

*Tracey: "We [both] feed young people into them because they've got a volunteer programme so those young people that come onto the IYL award ... we've got that avenue as well ... A young person that was volunteering with Rio Ferdinand is now a casual member of staff with us and has gone through his dance teacher training and so is a qualified dance teacher now with [us] ... RFF signposted him to us because he'd been through their programmes."*



# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall aim of the Inspiring Youth Leaders programme was to have a transformatory impact on its participants in three main ways: (i) individual/personal development; (ii) interpersonal connections and relationships, and (iii) leadership and social action. It sought to do this by equipping young people with the tools to pursue active citizenship, education, employment/training and/or enterprise. A key programme objective was to develop participants as youth leaders and to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience (via training and mentoring) to lead their own youth and community programmes thereby allowing them to deliver engagement activities and youth work initiatives for (other) 'hard to reach' young people.

Building upon and extending previous research and evaluation work undertaken by the Rio Ferdinand Foundation (see Parker and Marturano, 2016), the purpose of this report has been to provide evidence of the extent to which the IYL programme delivered on its stated aims thus meeting the needs of the young people and partners/stakeholders with whom it engaged. To this end, the report has highlighted a number of issues in relation to the impact and wider operationalization of the programme and in this section we provide a series of conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from the data under consideration. These are presented as a template of 'best practice' in relation to the ways in which such programmes may be used to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour and as a pathway for the personal and social development of marginalised and vulnerable young people. They also constitute a series of key learning points which may be applied and incorporated by others across the youth justice sector and beyond.

## PERSONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Rio Ferdinand Foundation continues to make a valuable contribution to the personal and social development of the young people with whom it works. The IYL programme bears testament to this with participants speaking positively about their experiences of the programme and reporting excellent levels of support from project staff via the establishment of trusting and impactful relationships. Young people considered the close mentoring support that they received from the IYL team to have been central to their success in achieving their personal goals. In particular, they spoke positively about the support which they had received in relation to: personal 'growth' and development, leadership experience, and employment and career aspirations. The majority articulated improvements in their levels of self-confidence (especially in relation to their communication with adults and professionals), self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience as a consequence of programme activities (i.e., through the design and implementation of social action projects), volunteering opportunities and training/work placements. A number spoke more specifically about the extent to which their involvement with the programme had positively impacted their mental health. Internal monitoring

and evaluation data evidences that 100% of young people believed that the IYL programme had positively impacted their lives and provided diversionary opportunities away from negative influences and/or involvement in crime whilst 95% reported improved self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation via IYL youth-led engagement activities. In turn, 90% of young people reported that being involved in RFF/IYL activities had helped to encourage new friendships and better relationships within their communities.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYABILITY

The IYL programme also made a valuable contribution to the skills development and employability needs of young people. For a number of participants, a key aspect of the programme was access to relevant training courses, work placements and volunteering opportunities/initiatives which allowed them to feel more empowered and better equipped to embark upon their chosen careers. Over the funding period, 451 young people took part in employability workshops, work placements, and further volunteering, training and career events. A central feature of the IYL programme for all participants was the support which they received from industry-based mentors especially with regard to the development of employability skills and the practicalities of building relationships and networks (i.e., social capital) and accessing employment/career opportunities (i.e., referrals to industry gatekeepers and related communication skills). Monitoring and evaluation data suggests that 95% of young people 'strongly agreed' that mock interview processes (involving programme partners) helped them to develop an increased awareness of their key skills and strengths to go into further training or employment. A number of participants also highlighted the opportunities which IYL presented in terms of gaining relevant qualifications and enhancing skills development and employability through participation in accredited and non-accredited vocational training, work placements, volunteering opportunities and initiatives. In total, 256 young people received free accredited training over the course of the three year programme. These qualifications included: the Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA), Arts Award Level 1, the Football Association (FA) Level 1 coaching badge, and the VRQ in Using Sport to Tackle Youth Crime Among Others. By empowering and equipping young people to design and implement their own social action projects, the IYL programme served not only to enhance the practical and organisational skills of participants but also to promote a sense of social inclusion and community cohesion amongst other 'hard-to-reach' cohorts.

## PARTNER / STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

By providing young people from a range of backgrounds with the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities, the IYL programme also fostered a sense of collectivity





and cohesion within and across its participant groups. Programme partners/stakeholders spoke openly about the effectiveness of IYL delivery both in terms of organizational routine and community impact (i.e., in relation to diverting local young people away from crime and/or antisocial behavior). The IYL programme established strong and extensive working relationships with local statutory, voluntary and community (delivery/strategic) partners and clear alignment existed between the overall aims of RFF and partner/stakeholder need in terms of impacting disadvantaged young people. In total, 53 community partners/stakeholders, including businesses, employers, sponsors and local organisations, worked together with RFF to create new and improved opportunities for young people into further volunteering or training. IYL also had a positive impact upon the perceptions of partners/stakeholder via its ability to engage marginalised youth and to directly address issues concerning youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Partners indicated that IYL operated in a highly effective and efficient manner pro-actively facilitating collaborative links with a wide range of community agencies and stakeholders. In turn, partner organisations reported positive and successful experiences of working with the IYL programme and the wider RFF staff team, speaking highly of the service that they received (i.e., professionalism and dedication). In addition, they articulated the added value that the IYL programme brought to their own organisations and the sense of hope and optimism that it carried in its targeted the localities. Indeed, project partners/stakeholders articulated an unequivocal desire to see the programme continue and/or expand in order to impact more young people.

## EMPOWERING OTHERS

As we have seen, a central objective of the IYL programme was to develop participants as youth leaders and to equip them to deliver engagement activities and youth work initiatives (social action projects) for other 'hard to reach' young people. During interview, all participants articulated the desire to do something positive for other young people (i.e., to 'give something back') and such sentiments were typically grounded within a 'shared experience' of traumatic lifestyle circumstance. In this sense, IYL was successful in developing a heightened sense of active citizenship amongst participants as they supported and empowered other marginalised young people (as advocates, role models and mentors) in negotiating such circumstances and in finding suitable coping strategies. Over the course of the funding period, the IYL programme supported a total of 353 young people to lead their own social action projects based within local communities using arts, media, drama and sports and it is clear from the findings of this

report that the RFF staff team understood the importance of incorporating youth 'voice' within the design and delivery of programme activities. This was especially evident in the youth-led approaches that were adopted around the shaping of participant social action projects (especially in the use of biographical narrative) where, within the bounds of safeguarding protocols, participants were empowered to take ownership of project content via an expression of their individual experiences views and opinions whilst at the same time being handed an element of responsibility for project management, i.e., budgeting, organisation, financing etc. Critical in all of this was the way in which young people were supported in their engagement of adults, professionals and stakeholder groups in relation to project outcomes.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## TO FURTHER EXPAND THE SCALE AND REACH OF IYL

Evidence presented in this report suggests that there is a strong desire from participants and partners/stakeholders alike to expand the IYL programme both in terms of scale and geographical reach. In order to do this effectively, stable funding streams would need to be in place. In line with the four-stage methodology developed by RFF in recent years, prior to any expansion of the programme, relevant scoping and consultation exercises should be undertaken with local agencies to discern the social and cultural complexion of the environments/locales under consideration and the specific needs in play.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The RFF/IYL staff team have a strong track record in partnership working and this continues to facilitate a number of benefits for young people, including: (i) training/education and employment opportunities; (ii) community cohesion as a consequence of close working relationships with existing groups/organisations; (iii) increased social capital via access to qualified/professional staff and occupational networks; and (iv) targeted impact in developing specific skill sets. It is clear that the relationships that exist between IYL and many of its partner agencies share a congruency in relation to overall aims and ethos. Hence, it is important that any expansion of the programme does not lead to compromise in terms of the depth and quality of the relationships that are developed with partner organisations.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

One of the key recommendations by Parker and Marturano (2016) was that RFF should seek to develop and expand its provision to accommodate: (i) the development of young people as peer mentors, (ii) the engagement of young people in social action and community programmes, and (iii) the mentoring of further cohorts of young people in new geographical areas. More specifically, it was suggested that peer mentoring relationships should be established and reinforced by way of the 'shared life experiences' of mentors and mentees thereby facilitating the development of 'youth leadership' opportunities for participants. Evidence from this report clearly demonstrates that the IYL programme has been successful in achieving these aims. More specifically, it has been successful in enhancing the overall mental health and well-being of participants increasing, in particular, their resilience, communication skills and self-confidence and it is suggested that these aspects of the programme should be developed further.

## CONTINUITY PATHWAYS

As previous research has highlighted, a characteristic of effective partnership working within youth justice contexts is the mapping of accessible exit strategies which transition programme participants to partner agency initiatives and beyond (i.e., training, education, work placements, employment etc.). This report provides evidence to suggest that there are strong continuity pathways between the IYL programme and a number of its partner agencies and any expansion of the programme should seek to further develop these transition/exit strategies via clear and appropriate links to relevant organisations and support networks (i.e., the referral of young people into accredited vocational and/or educational pathways).



*“One of the boys who went to the workshop he added me on social media afterwards and he messaged me and he said ‘Thank you for putting that on cos’ that has really helped me’. And that’s what I wanted. As long as there’s like one person then that’s all that matters ...”*

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**WITH THANKS**





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